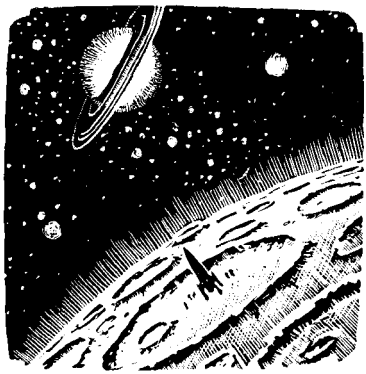
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY
for NEW subscribers
READ AND SAVE!

Here's an EXCITING invitation to bring into your home the world's greatest SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE! You can now have FANTASTIC UNIVERSE delivered to you each month at a special low price that saves you almost ⅓ of the price you would pay on the newsstand!

As a FANTASTIC UNIVERSE reader you get the most thrilling stories by such masters as Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, William Tenn, Judith Merril, Theodore Sturgeon, Clifford D. Simak and many others of the greats.

• • • • •

FOR — the greatest possible variety each month within the range of SCIENCE FICTION and FANTASY by both your old favorites and our new discoveries. . . .

FOR — interesting discussions with your friends of the exciting new stories in every breath-taking issue, while they too are still under the enchanting spell of its prophetic magic. . . .

FOR — the absolute delight of the fabulous cover designs of many world-renowned Science-Fiction artists together with their own 'Story about the Cover.' . . .

TAKE ADVANTAGE of this money-saving opportunity by mailing the coupon at the right **NOW.** This exceptional offer assures you of receiving at low cost, the finest Science Fiction and Fantasy each month of the kind you will not want to miss.

ENJOY MORE S. F. and FANTASY by MORE GREAT WRITERS in this MONEY SAVING OFFER

8 ISSUES FOR ONLY $2.

IF YOU REMIT NOW! ! !

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

KING-SIZE PUBLICATIONS, Inc. FU-77
320 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.

Yes! I want to receive FANTASTIC UNIVERSE at your SPECIAL RATE. Please enter my subscription for 8 issues for $2 which I am enclosing:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *Zone* _____ *State* _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GABRIEL HEATTER reports on dramatic new invention that triumphs over hearing loss and hides deafness as never before

New Way for Deaf to Hear with Both Ears ...Eye-Glass Hearing

by Gabriel Heatter Internationally Famous Commentator heard nightly over MBS network

A HISTORY MAKING INVENTION at last enables the deaf to hear clearly again with both ears—as nature intended.

This dramatic advance, perfected by Beltone electronic scientists, offers the deafened many vital advantages denied them until now. It adds a new dimension to hearing. Leading audiologists reveal that this enables the deaf to *understand up to 40% better* than with corrected hearing in only one ear.

Clinical tests prove that hearing full dimensionally with both ears helps the deaf these 5 wonderful ways: 1—Hear *where* sounds come from. 2—Tell the *distance* of sounds. 3—Tell *who* is talking, even in crowded, noisy places. 4—Enjoy far more *natural, life-like* hearing, free from distortion as never before. 5—End head-turning like an antenna, to catch sounds with the "good" ear.

Thousands of users of this electronic invention that revolutionizes the correction of hearing loss call it a "Godsend."

This exciting discovery—Beltone Hearing Glasses—also solves the problem of people who hesitated to wear a conventional hearing aid for fear of being stared at . . . of advertising hearing loss. Beltone scientists achieved this by completely hiding an all-transistor hearing aid and receiver inside one temple of glasses.

Gone is the once tell-tale cord, gone is the receiver button in the ear. A tiny, almost invisible tube carries sound to the ear. *Nothing* to hide in hair or clothes, no attachments behind the ear. Even close friends do not guess you wear a hearing aid.

Beltone Hearing Glasses may help you recapture happier living through normal conversation with loved ones and friends . . . blessed inspiration of church . . . full pleasure from TV, radio, movies. Beltone Hearing Glasses may be the answer to your prayers . . . enable you to become part of the everyday world again.

FREE book on request. *A fully illustrated new book explains how Beltone Hearing Glasses enable the deaf to hear with both ears and hide deafness as never before. For your free copy, without obligation, write: Dept. LH-6, Beltone Hearing Aid Co., 31 W. 47th St., New York 36, N. Y.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

JULY, 1957
Vol. 8, No. 1

The Seal of the Damned 4
by *August Derleth*

The Native Soil 28
by *Alan E. Nourse*

The Machine 46
by *Robert Sheckley*

A Candle for Katie 51
by *Lila Borison*

Shapes in the Sky 54
by *Civilian Saucer Intelligence*

Book of Goots 60
by *John Healy*

Backward Turn Backward 75
by *Dorothy H. Edgerly*

Landing for Midge 93
by *Lee Correy*

Voyage Beyond the Night 101
by *John Victor Peterson*

Song of Death 106
by *C. Bird*

The Fuzzies 110
by *Lloyd Arthur Eshbach*

Fiddler on Titan 119
by *Manly Wade Wellman*

H. L. Herbert
Publisher

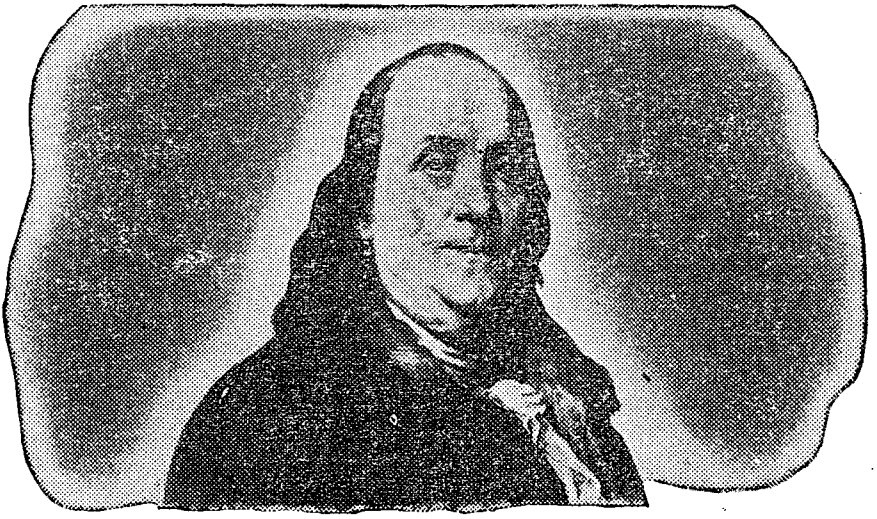
Hans Stefan Santesson
Editorial Director

Virgil Finlay
Cover Design

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, Vol. 8, No. 1. Published monthly by King-Size Publications, Inc., 320 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 1, N. Y. Subscription, 12 issues $3.75, single copies 35c. Foreign postage extra. Reentered as second-class matter at the post office, New York, N. Y. Additional entry, Holyoke, Mass. The characters in this magazine are entirely fictitious and have no relation to any persons living or dead. Copyright, 1957, by King-Size Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. July, 1957. Printed in U. S. A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT SECRET POWER DID THIS MAN POSSESS?



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (A Rosicrucian)

WHY was this man great? How does anyone—man or woman—achieve greatness? Is it not by mastery of the powers within ourselves?

Know the mysterious world within you! Attune yourself to the wisdom of the ages! Grasp the inner power of your mind! Learn the secrets of a full and peaceful life! Benjamin Franklin—like many other learned and great men and women—was a Rosicrucian. The Rosicrucians (NOT a religious organization) first came to America in 1694. Today, headquarters of the Rosicrucians send over seven million pieces of mail annually to all parts of the world.

The Rosicrucians
SAN JOSE (AMORC) CALIFORNIA

THIS BOOK FREE!

Write for YOUR FREE COPY of "The Mastery of Life"—TODAY. No obligation. No salesmen. A non-profit organization. Address: Scribe

SEND THIS COUPON

Scribe A. T. B.
The ROSICRUCIANS
(AMORC)
San Jose, California

Please send me the *free* book, *The Mastery of Life*, which explains how I may learn to use my faculties and powers of mind.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____

ZONE_____ STATE_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the seal of the damned

by . . . AUGUST DERLETH

There were people who smiled with a strange, secretive air when they heard his name . . . It was not a friendly smile.

MY PATERNAL grandfather, whom I never saw except in a darkened room, used to say of me to my parents, "Keep him away from the sea!" as if I had some reason to fear water, when, in fact, I have always been drawn to it. But those born under one of the water signs—mine is Pisces—have a natural affinity for water, so much is well known. They are said to be psychic, too, but that is another matter, perhaps. At any rate, that was my grandfather's judgment; a strange man, whom I could not have described to save my soul—though that, in the light of day, is an ambiguity indeed! That was before my father was killed in an automobile accident, and afterward it was never said in vain, for my mother kept me back in the hills, well away from the sight and sound and the smells of the sea.

But what is meant to be will be. I was in college in a midwestern city when my mother died, and the week after that, my Uncle Sylvan died, too, leaving everything he had to me. Him I had

August Derleth, as Lovecraft did earlier, takes us into that strange world of shadows where race memories, our own and those of forgotten peoples, hover in the shadows, eyes gleaming hungrily. Few writers and students of the Occult have had their extraordinary grasp of the ages old secrets and strange doors that Man has tried so desperately to forget.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never seen. He was the eccentric one of the family, the queer one, the black sheep; he was known by a variety of names, and disparaged in all of them, except by my grandfather, who did not speak of him at all without sighing. I was, in fact, the last of my grandfather's direct line; there was a great-uncle living somewhere—in Asia, I always understood, though what he did there no one seemed to know, except that it had something to do with the sea, shipping, perhaps—and so it was only natural that I should inherit my Uncle Sylvan's places.

For he had two, and both, as luck would have it, were on the sea, one in a Massachusetts town called Innsmouth, and the other isolated on the coast well above that town. Even after the inheritance taxes, there was enough money to make it unnecessary for me to go back to college, or to do anything I had no mind to do, and the only thing I had a mind to do was that which had been forbidden me for these twenty-two years, to go to the sea, perhaps to buy a sailboat or a yacht or whatever I liked.

But that was not quite the way it was to be. I saw the lawyer in Boston and went on to Innsmouth. A strange town, I found it. Not friendly, though there were those who smiled when they learned who I was, smiled with a strange, secretive air, as if they knew something they would not say of my Uncle Sylvan. Fortunately, the place at Innsmouth was the lesser of his places; it was plain that he had not occupied it much; it was a dreary, somber old mansion, and I discovered, much to my surprise, that it was the family homestead, having been built by my great-grandfather, who had been in the China trade, and lived in by my grandfather for a good share of his life, and the name of Phillips was still held in a kind of awe in that town.

No, it was the other place in which my Uncle Sylvan had spent most of his life. He was only fifty when he died, but he had lived much like my grandfather; he had not been seen about much, being seldom away from that darkly overgrown house which crowned a rocky bluff on the coast above Innsmouth. It was not a lovely house, not such a one as would call to the lover of beauty, but it had its own attraction, nevertheless, and I felt it at once. I thought of it as a house that belonged to the sea, for the sound of the Atlantic was always in it, and trees shut it from the land, while to the sea it was open, its wide windows looking ever east. It was not an old house, like that other—thirty years, I was told—though it had been built by my uncle himself on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the site of a far older house that had belonged to my great-grandfather, too.

It was a house of many rooms, but of them all the great central study was the only room to remember. Though all the rest of the house was of one storey, rambling away from that central room, that room had the height of two storeys, and was sunken besides, with its walls covered with books and all manner of curios, particularly outre and suggestive carvings and sculptures, paintings and masks which came from many places of the world, but especially from the Polynesias, from Aztec, Maya, and Inca country, and from ancient Indian tribes in the northwest coastal areas of the North American continent—a fascinating and ever provocative collection which had originally been begun by my grandfather, and continued and added to by my Uncle Sylan. A great hand-made rug, bearing a strange octopoid design, covered the center of the floor, and all the furniture in the room was set between the walls and the center of it; nothing at all stood on that rug.

There was above all else a symbolization in the decor of the house. Here and there, woven into rugs—beginning with that great round rug in the central room—into hangings, on placques—was a design which seemed to be of a singularly perplexing seal, a round, disc-like pattern bearing on it a crude likeness of the astronomical symbol of Aquarius, the water-carrier—a likeness that might have been drawn remote ages ago, when the shape of Aquarius was not as it is today,—surmounting a hauntingly indefinite suggestion of a buried city, against which, in the precise center of the disc, was imposed an indescribable figure that was at once icthyic and saurian, simultaneously octopoid and semi-human, which, though drawn in miniature, was clearly intended to represent a colossus in someone's imagination. Finally, in letters so fine that the eye could hardly read them, the disc was ringed round with meaningless words in a language I could not read, though far down inside of me it seemed to strike a common chord—*Ph'nglui mglwnafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'naglftagn.*

That this curious design should have exercised upon me from the beginning the strongest possible attraction did not seem at all strange, though its significance did not come to me until later. Nor could I account for the unimaginably strong pull of the sea; though I had never before set foot in this place, I had the most vivid impression of having returned home. Never, in all my years, had my parents taken me east; I had not before been east of,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ohio, and the closest I had come to any substantial body of water had been in brief visits to Lake Michigan or Lake Huron. That this undeniable attraction existed so patently I laid quite naturally to ancestral memory—had not my forebears lived by the sea, on it and beside it? For how many generations? Two of which I knew, and perhaps more before that. They had been mariners for generations, until something happened that caused my grandfather to strike far inland, and to shun the sea thereafter, and cause it to be shunned by all who came after him.

I mention this now because its meaning comes clear in all that happened afterward, which I am dedicated to setting down, before I am gone to be among my own people again. The house and the sea drew me; together they were home, and gave more meaning to that word even than the haven I had shared so fondly with my doting parents only a few years before. A strange thing—and yet, stranger still, I did not think it so at the time; it seemed the most natural occurrence, and I did not question it.

Of what manner of man my Uncle Sylvan was, I had no way of knowing at once. I did find an early portrait of him, done by a amateur photographer. It was a likeness of an unusually grave young man, surely not more than twenty, to judge by his appearance, and of an aspect which, while not exactly unattractive, was doubtless repellent to many people, for he had a face which suggested something more than just the humanness of him—with his somewhat flat nose, his very wide mouth, his strangely basilisk eyes. There was no more recent photograph of him, but there were people who remembered him from the years when he still walked or drove into Innsmouth to shop, as I learned on a day I stopped into Asa Clarke's store to buy my supplies for the week.

"Ye're a Phillips?" asked the aged proprietor.

I admitted that I was.

"Son of Sylvan?"

"My uncle never married," I said.

"We've had naught but his word for that," he replied. "Then ye'll be Jared's son. How is he?"

"Dead."

The old man shook his head. "Dead, too, eh?—the last of that generation, then. And you. . ."

"I'm the last of mine."

"The Phillipses were once high and mighty hereabouts. An old family—but ye'll know it."

I said I did not. I had come from the midwest, and had little knowledge of my forebears.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"That so?" He gazed at me for a moment almost in disbelief. "Well, the Phillipses go back about as far as the Marshes. The two were in business long ago, together. China trade. Shipped from here and Boston for the Orient—Japan, China, the islands—and they brought back—" But here he stopped, his face paled a little, and he shrugged. "Many things. Aye, many things indeed." He gave me a baffling look. "Ye figurin' to stay hereabouts?"

I told him I had inherited and moved into my uncle's place on the coast. I was now looking for servants to staff it.

"Ye'll not find 'em," he said, shaking his head. "The place is too far up the coast, and much disliked. If any more of the Phillipses were left—" He spread his hands helplessly. "But most of them died in '28, that time of the explosions and the fire. Still, ye might find a Marsh or two who'd do for you; they're still about. Not so many of 'em died that night."

With this oblique and mystifying reference I was not then concerned. My first thought was of someone to help me at my uncle's house. "Marsh," I repeated. "Can you name one and give me his address?"

"There is one," he said thoughtfully, and then smiled, as if to himself.

That was how I came to meet Ada Marsh.

She was twenty-five, but there were days when she looked much younger, and other days when she looked older. I went to her home, found her, asked her to come to work for me days. She had a car of her own, even if but an old-fashioned Model T; she could drive up and back; and the prospect of working in what she called strangely, "Sylvan's hiding," seemed to appeal to her. Indeed, she seemed almost eager to come, and promised to come that day still, if I wished her to. She was not a good-looking girl, but, like my uncle, she was strangely attractive to me, however much she may have turned others away; there was a certain charm about her wide, flat-lipped mouth, and her eyes, which were undeniably cold, seemed often very warm to me.

She came the following morning, and it was plain to me that she had been in the house before, for she walked about as if she knew it.

"You've been here before!" I challenged her.

"The Marshes and the Phillipses are old friends," she said, and looked at me as if I must have known. And indeed, I felt at that moment as if I did certainly know it was just as she said. "Old, old friends—as old, Mr. Phillips, as the earth itself is old. As

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

old as the water-carrier and the water."

She too was strange. She had been here, as a guest of Uncle Sylvan, I found out, more than once. Now, without hesitation, she had come to work for me, and with such a curious smile on her lips—"as old as the water-carrier and the water"—which made me to think of the design which lay all about us, and for the first time, I now believe, thinking back upon it, implanting in me a certain feeling of uneasiness; for the second moment of it was but a few words away.

"Have you heard, Mr. Phillips?" she asked then.

"Heard what?" I asked.

"If you had heard, you would not need to be told."

But her real purpose was not to come to work for me, I soon found out; it was to have access to the house, as I learned when I came back up from the beach ahead of schedule, and found her engrossed not in work, but in a systematic and detailed search of the great central room. I watched her for a while—how she moved books, leafed through them; how she carefully lifted the pictures on the walls, the sculptures on the shelves, looking into every place where somthing might be hidden. I went back and slammed the door then; so that when I walked into the study, she was at work dusting, quite as if she had never been at anything else.

It was my impulse to speak, but I foresaw that it would not do to tip my hand. If she sought something, perhaps I could find it first. So I said nothing, and that evening, after she had gone, I took up where she had stopped, not knowing what to look for, but being able to estimate something of its size by the very fact of the places into which she had looked. Something compact, small, hardly larger than a book itself.

Could it be a book? I asked myself repeatedly that night.

For, of course, I found nothing, though I sought until midnight, and gave up only when I was exhausted, satisfied that I had gone farther in my search than Ada could go on the morrow, even if she had most of the day. I sat down to rest in one of the overstuffed chairs ranged close to the walls in that room, and there had my first hallucination—I call it so for want of a better, more precise word. For I was far from sleep when I heard a sound that was like nothing so much as the susurrus of some great beast's breathing; and, wakened in a trice, was sure that the house itself, and the rock on which it sat, and the sea lapping at the rocks below were at one in breathing, like various parts of one great sentient being, and I felt as I had often felt when looking at the paintings of certain

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contemporary artists—Dale Nichols in particular—who have seen earth and the contours of the land as representative of a great sleeping man or woman—felt as if I rested on chest or belly or forehead of a being so vast I could not comprehend its vastness.

I do not remember how long the illusion lasted. I kept thinking of Ada Marsh's question, "Have you heard?" Was it this she meant? For surely the house and the rock on which it stood were alive, and as restless as the sea that flowed away to the horizon to the east. I sat experiencing the illusion for a long time. Did the house actually tremble as if in respiration? I believe it did, and at the time I laid it to some flaw in its structure, and accounted in its strange movement and sounds for the reluctance of other natives to work for me.

On the third day I confronted Ada in the midst of her search.

"What are you looking for, Ada?" I asked.

She measured me with the utmost candor, and decided that I had seen her thus before.

"Your uncle was in search of something I thought maybe he had found. I too am interested in it. Perhaps you would be, too, if you know. You are like us—you are one of us—of the Marshes and the Phillipses before you."

"What would it be?"

"A notebook, a diary, a journal, papers.." She shrugged. "Your uncle spoke very little of it to me, but I know. He was gone very often, long periods at a time. Where was he then? Perhaps he had reached his goal. For he never went away by road."

"Perhaps I can find it."

She shook her head. "You know too little. You are like.....an outsider."

"Will you tell me?"

"No. Who speaks so to one too young to understand? No, Mr. Phillips, I will say nothing. You are not ready."

I resented this, and I resented her. Yet I did not ask her to leave. Her attitude was a provocation and a challenge.

Two days later I came upon that which Ada Marsh sought.

My Uncle Sylvan's papers were concealed in a place where Ada Marsh had looked first—behind a shelf of curious, occult books, but set into a secret recess there, which I happened to open only by clumsy chance. A journal of sorts, and many scraps and sheets of paper, covered with tiny script in what I recognized as my uncle's hand. I took them at once to my own room and locked myself in, as if I feared that at this hour, at dead of night, Ada Marsh might come for them. An absurd thing to do—for I not only did not fear her, but actually was drawn to her far more than I would have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dreamed I might be when first I met her.

Beyond question, the discovery of the papers represented a turning point in my existence. Say that my first twenty-two years were static, on a waiting plane; say that the early days at my Uncle Sylvan's coast house were a time of suspension between that earlier plane and that which was to come; the turning point came surely with my discovery—and yes, reading—of the papers.

But what was I to make of the first paragraph on which I gazed?

"Subt. Cont. shelf. Northernmost end at Inns., stretching all the way around to vic. Singapore. Orig. source off Ponape? A. suggests R. in Pacific, vic. of Ponape; E. holds R. nr. Inns. Maj. writers suggest it in depths. Could R. occupy entire Cont. shelf from Inns. to Singapore?"

That was the first. The second was even more baffling.

"C. who waits dreaming in R. is all in all, and everywhere. He is in R. at Inns. and at Ponape, he is among the islands and in the depths. How are the Deep Ones related? And where did Obad. and Cyrus make the first contact? Ponape or one of the lesser islands? And how? On land or in the water?"

But my uncle's papers were not alone in that treasure trove. There were other, even more disturbing revelations. The letter, for instance, from the Rev. Jabez Lovell Phillips to some unnamed person, dated over a century before, in which he wrote:

"On a certain day in August of 1797, Capt. Obadiah Marsh, accompanied by his First Mate Cyrus Alcott Phillips, reported their ship, the *Cory*, lost with all hands in the Marquesas. The Captain and his First Mate arrived in Innsmouth harbor in a rowboat, yet did not seem any the worse for weather or wear, despite having covered a distance of many thousands of miles in a craft deemed well nigh impossible of having carried them so far. Thereafter began in Innsmouth such a series of happenings as were to make the settlement accursed within one generation, for a strange race was born to the Marshes and the Phillipses, a blight was fallen upon their families which followed after the appearance of women—and how came they there?—who were the wives of the Captain and his First Mate, and loosed upon Innsmouth a spawn of Hell that no man has found it possible to put down, and against whom all the appeals to Heaven I have made have no avail.

"What disports in the waters off Innsmouth in the late hours of darkness? Mermaids, say some. Faugh, what idiocy!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mermaids, indeed. What, if not the accursed spawn of the Marsh and Phillips tribes."

Of this I read no more, being curiously shaken. I turned next to my uncle's journal, and found the last entry:

"R. is as I thought. Next time I shall see C. himself, where he lies in the depths, waiting upon the day to come forth once more."

But there had been no next time for Uncle Sylvan—only death. There were entries before this one, many of them; clearly, my uncle wrote of matters beyond my knowledge. He wrote of Cthulhu and R'lyeh, of Hastur and Lloigor, of Shub-Niggurath and Yog-Sothoth, of the Plateau of Leng, of the *Sussex Fragments* and the *Necronomicon*, of the Marsh Drift and the Abominable Snowmen—but, most often of all, he wrote of R'lyeh, and of Great Cthulhu—the "R." and the "C." of his papers—and of his abiding search for them, for my uncle, as was made plain in his own handwriting, was in search of these places or beings, I could hardly distinguish one from the other in the way he set down his thoughts, for his notes and his journal were written for no other eyes but his own, and he alone understood them, for I had no frame of reference upon which to draw.

There was, too, a crude map drawn by some hand before my Uncle Sylvan's, for it was old and badly creased; it fascinated me, though I had no genuine understanding of its real worth. It was a rough map of the world—but not of that world I knew or had learned about in my studies; rather of a world that existed only in the imagination of him who had made the map. For deep in the heart of Asia, for instance, the mapmaker had fixed the "Pl. Leng," and, above this, near what ought to have been Mongolia, "Kadath in the Cold Waste", which was specified as "in space-time continua; coterminous", and in the sea about the Polynesians, he had indicated the "Marsh drift," which, I gathered, was a break in the ocean floor. Devil Reef off Innsmouth was indicated, too, and so was Ponape—these were recognizable; but the majority of place-names on that fabulous map were utterly alien to me.

I hid the things I had found where I was sure Ada Marsh would not think of looking for them, and I returned, late though the hour was, to the central room. And there I sought out, as if by instinct, unerringly, the shelf behind which the things I had found had been concealed. There were some of the things mentioned in Uncle Sylvan's notes—the *Sussex Fragments*, the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, the *Cultes des Goules*, by the Comte d'Erlette, the *Book of*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eibon, Von Junzt's *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, and many others. But alas! most of them were in Latin or Greek, which I could not read well, however ably I could struggle through French or German. Yet I found enough in those pages to fill me with wonder and terror, with horror and a strangely exhilarating excitement, as if I had realized that my Uncle Sylvan had bequeathed me not only his house and property, but his quest and the lore of aeons before the time of man.

For I sat reading until the morning sun invaded the room and paled the lamps I had lit—reading about the Great Old Ones, who were first among the universes, and the Elder Gods, who fought and vanquished the rebellious Ancient Ones—who were Great Cthulhu, the water-dweller; Hastur, who reposed at the Lake of Hali in the Hyades; Yog-Sothoth, the All-in-One and One-in-All; Ithaqua, the Wind-Walker; Lloigor, the Star-Treader; Cthugha, who abides in fire; great Azathoth—all of whom had been vanquished and exiled to outer spaces against the coming of another day in far time yet to come, when they could rise with their followers and once again vanquish the races of mankind and challenge the Elder Gods; of their minions—the Deep Ones of the seas and the watery places on Earth, the Dholes, the Abominable Snowmen of Tibet and the hidden Plateau of Leng, the Shantaks, who flew from Kadath in the Cold Waste at the bidding of Wind-Walker, the Wendigo, cousin of Ithaqua; of their rivalries, one and yet divided. I read all this and more—damnably more: the collection of newspaper clippings of inexplicable happenings, accounted for by my Uncle Sylvan as evidence of the truth in which he believed. And in the pages of these books was more of the curious language I had found woven into the decorations of my uncle's house—*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*,—which was translated, I read in more than one of these accounts, as: "In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu lies dreaming. . ."

And my uncle's quest was surely nothing more than to find R'lyeh, the sunken subaqueous place of Cthulhu!

In the cold light of day, I challenged my own conclusions. Could my Uncle Sylvan have believed in such a panoply of myths? Or was his pursuit merely the quest of a man steeped in idleness? My uncle's library consisted of many books, ranging through the world's literature; yet one considerable section of his shelving was given over completely to books on occult subjects, books of strange beliefs and even stranger facts,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inexplicable to science, books on little-known religious cults; and these were supplemented by huge scrapbooks of clippings from newspapers and magazines, reading which filled me at one and the same time with a sense of premonitory dread and a flame of compulsive joy. For in these prosaically reported facts there lay oddly convincing evidence to augment belief in the myth-pattern to which my uncle had patently subscribed.

After all, the pattern in itself was not new. All religious beliefs, all myth-patterns, in no matter what systems of culture, are basically familiar—they are predicated upon a struggle between forces of good and forces of evil. This pattern was part, too, of my uncle's mythos—the Great Old Ones and the Elder Gods, who may, for all I could figure out, have been the same, represented primal good; the Ancient Ones, primal evil. As in many cultures, the Elder Gods were not often named; the Ancient Ones were, and often, for they were still worshipped and served by followers throughout earth and among the planetary spaces; and they were aligned not only against the Elder Gods, but also against one another in a ceaseless struggle for ultimate dominion. They were, in brief, representations of elemental forces, and each had his element—Cthulhu of water, Cthugha of fire, Ithaqua of air, Hastur of interplanetary spaces; and others among them belonged to great primal forces—Shub-Niggurath, the Messenger of the Gods, of fertility; Yog-Sothoth, of the time-space continua, Azathoth—in a sense the fountain-head of evil.

Was this pattern after all not familiar? The Elder Gods could so easily have become the Christian Trinity; the Ancient Ones could for most believers have been altered into Sathanus and Beelzebub, Mephistofles and Azarael. Except that they were co-existent, which disturbed me, though I knew that systems of belief constantly overlapped in the history of mankind.

More—there was certain evidence to show that the Cthulhu myth-pattern had existed not only long before the Christian mythos, but also before that of ancient China and the dawn of mankind, surviving unchanged in remote areas of the earth—among the Tcho-Tcho people of Tibet, and the Abominable Snowmen of the high plateaus of Asia, and a strange sea-dwelling people known as the Deep Ones, who were amphibian hybrids, bred of ancient matings between humanoids and batrachia, mutant developments of the race of man—surviving with recognizable facets in newer religious symbols—in Quetzalcoatl and oth-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ers among the Gods of Aztec, Mayan, and Inca religions; in the idols of Easter Island; in the ceremonial masks of the Polynesians and the Northwest Coast Indians, where the tentacle and octopoid shape which were the marks of Cthulhu persisted;—so that in a sense it might be said that the Cthulhu mythos was primal.

Even putting all this into the realm of theory and speculation, I was left with the tremendous amounts of clippings which my uncle had collected. These prosaic newspaper accounts served perhaps more effectively in giving pause to any doubt I might have had because all were so palpably reportorial, for none of my uncle's clippings derived from any sensational source, all came straight from news columns or magazines offering factual material only, like the *National Geographic*. So that I was left asking myself certain searching questions.

What did happen to Johansen and the ship *Emma* if not what he himself set forth? Was any other explanation possible?

And why did the U. S. Government send destroyers and submarines to depth-bomb the ocean about Devil Reef outside the harbor of Innsmouth? And arrest scores of Innsmouth people who were never afterward seen again? And fire the coastal area, destroying scores of others? Why—if it were not true that strange rites were being observed by Innsmouth people who bore a hellish relationship to certain sea-dwellers seen by night at Devil Reef?

And what happened to Wilmarth in the mountain country of Vermont, when he came too close to the truth in his research into the cults of the Ancient Ones? And to certain writers of what purported to be fiction—Lovecraft, Howard, Barlow—and what purported to be science—like Fort—when they came too close to truth? Dead, all of them. Dead or missing, like Wilmarth. Dead before their time, most of them, while still comparatively young men. My uncle had their books—though only Lovecraft and Fort had been extensively published in book form—and they were opened by me and read, with greater, perturbation than ever, for the fictions of H. P. Lovecraft had, it seemed to me, the same relation to truth as the facts, so inexplicable to science, reported by Charles Fort. If fiction, Lovecraft's tales were damnably bound to fact—even dismissing Fort's facts, the fact inherent in the myths of mankind; they were quasi-myths themselves, as was the untimely fate of their author, whose early death had already given rise to a score of legends, from among which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prosaic fact was ever more and more difficult to discover.

But there was time for me to delve into the secrets of my uncle's books, to read further into his notes. So much was clear—he had belief enough to have begun a search for sunken R'lyeh, the city or the kingdom—one could not be sure which it was, or whether indeed it ringed half the earth from the coast of Massachusetts in the Atlantic to the Polynesian Islands in the Pacific—to which Cthulhu had been banished, dead and yet not dead,—"Dead Cthulhu lies dreaming!"—as it read in more than one account, waiting, biding his time to rise and rebel again, to strike once more for dominion against the rule of the Elder Gods, for a world and universes of his own persuasions—for is it not true that if evil triumphs, then evil becomes the law of life, and it is good that must be fought, the rule of the majority establishing the norm, and other than that being abnormal, or, by he way of mankind, the bad, the abhorrent?

My uncle had sought R'lyeh, and he had written disturbingly of how he had done so. He had gone down into the Atlantic's depths, from his home here on the coast, gone down off Devil Reef and beyond. But there was no mention of how he had done so. By diving equipment? Bathysphere? Of these I had found no evidence whatsoever at the house. It was on these explorations that he had gone during those periods when he had been so long missing from the house on the coast. And yet there had been no mention of any kind of craft, either, nor had my uncle left any such thing in his estate.

If R'lyeh was the object of my uncle's search, what then was Ada Marsh's? This remained to be seen, and to the end of discovering it, I allowed some of my uncle's least informative notes to lie on the library table on the following day. I managed to watch her when she came upon them, and I was left in no doubt, by her reaction, that this was the object of her search—the cache I had found. She had known of these papers. But how?

I confronted her. Even before I had a chance to speak, she spoke.

"You found them!" she cried.

"How did you know about them?"

"I knew what he was doing."

"The search?"

She nodded.

"'You can't believe," I protested.

"How can you be so stupid?" she cried angrily. "Did your parents tell you nothing? Your grandfather? How could you have been raised in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

darkness?" She came close to me, thrust the papers in her hand at me, and demanded, "Let me see the rest of them."

I shook my head.

"Please! They are of no use to you."

"We shall see."

"Tell me, then—he had begun the search?"

"Yes. But I do not know how. There is neither a diver's suit nor a boat."

At this she favored me with a glance which was a challenging mingling of pity and contempt.

"You have not even read all he had written! You haven't read the books—nothing. Do you know what you're standing on?"

"This rug?" I asked wonderingly.

"No, no—the design, the pattern. It's e v e r y w h e r e. Don't you know why? Because it is the great seal of R'lyeh! So much at least he discovered years ago, and was proud to emblazon it here. You stand on what you seek! Look further and find his ring!"

After Ada Marsh left that day, I turned once more to my uncle's papers. I did not leave them until long past midnight, but by that time I had gone through most of them cursorily, and some of them with the closest attention. I found it difficult to believe what I read, yet clearly my Uncle Sylvan had not only believed it, but seemed actually to have taken some part in it himself. He had dedicated himself early in life to the search for the sunken kingdom, he professed openly a devotion to Cthulhu, and, most suggestive of all, his writings contained many times chilling hints of encounters—sometimes in the ocean's depths, sometimes in the streets of legend-haunted Arkham, an ancient, gambrel-roofed town which lay inland from Innsmouth, not far from the coast along the Miskatonic River, or in nearby Dunwich, or even Innsmouth—with men—or beings which were not men—I could hardly tell which—who believed as he did and were bound in the same dark bondage to this resurgent myth from the distant past.

And yet, despite my inconoclasm, there was, too, an edge of belief I could not diminish. Perhaps it was because of the strange insinuations in his n o t e s—the half-statements, which were meant only for reference to his own knowledge, and thus never clear, for he referred to something he knew too well to set down—the insinuations about the unhallowed marriages of Obadiah Marsh and "three others"—could there have been a Phillips among them?—and the subsequent discovery of photographs of the Marsh women, Obadiah's widow—a curiously flat-faced woman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very dark of skin, with a wide, thin-lipped mouth—and the younger Marshes, all of whom resembled their mother—together with odd references to their curious hopping gait, so much a characteristic of "those who descended from those who came back alone from the sinking of the *Cory*," as Uncle Sylvan put it. What he meant to say was unmistakable—Obadiah Marsh had married in Ponape a woman who was not a Polynesian, yet lived there, and belonged to a sea-race which was only semi-human, and his children and his children's children had borne the stigmata of that marriage, which had in turn led to the holocaust visited upon Innsmouth in 1928, and to the destruction of so many members of the old Innsmouth families. Though my uncle wrote in the most casual manner, there was horror behind his words, and the echo of disaster rolled out from behind the sentences and paragraphs of his writing.

For these of whom he wrote were allied to the Deep Ones; like them, they were amphibious creatures. Of how far the accursed taint went, he did not speculate, nor was there ever word to settle his own status in relation to them. Captain Obadiah Marsh—presumably also Cyrus Phillips, and two others of the *Cory's* crew who had remained behind in Ponape—certainly shared none of the curious traits of their wives and children; but whether the taint went beyond their children, none could say. Was it this Ada Marsh had meant when she had said to me, "You are one of us!?" Or had she reference to some even darker secret? Presumably my grandfather's abhorrence of the sea was due to his knowledge of his father's deeds; he, at least, had successfully resisted the dark heritage.

But my uncle's papers were on the one hand too diffuse to make a coherent account, and on the other too plain to enlist immediate belief. What d i s t u r b e d me immediately most of all were the repeated hints that his home, this house, was a "haven", a "point" of contact, an "opening to that which lies below"; and the speculations about the "breathing" of the house and the rocky bluff which were so often to be found in the early pages of his notes, and to which no reference whatsoever was made later on. What he had set down was baffling and challenging, fearsome and wonderful; it filled me with awe and at one and the same time an angry disbelief and a wild wish to believe, to know.

I sought everywhere to find out, but was only baffled the more. People in Innsmouth were close-mouthed; some of them actually shunned me—crossed the street at my approach, and in the Italian district frankly crossed them-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

selves as if to ward off the evil eye. No one offered any information, and even at the public library I could obtain no books or records which might help, for these, the librarian told me, had been confiscated and destroyed by government men after the fire and explosions of 1928. I sought in other places—I learned even darker secrets at Arkham and Dunwich, and in the great library of Miskatonic University found at last the fountainhead of all books of dark lore: the half-fabled *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred, which I was allowed to read only under the watchful eye of a librarian's assitant.

It was then, two weeks after my discovery of my uncle's papers, that I found his ring. This was where one would least have expected to find it, and yet where it was bound to be—in a small packet of his personal belongings returned to the house by the undertaker and left unwrapped in his bureau drawer. The ring was of silver, a massive thing, inlaid with a milky stone which resembled pearl, but was not, and inlaid with the seal of R'lyeh.

I examined it closely. There was nothing extraordinary about it, save its size—to look upon; the wearing of it, however, carried with it unimaginable results. For I had no sooner put it on my finger than it was as if new dimensions opened up to me—or as if the old horizons were pushed back limitlessly. All my senses were made more acute. The very first thing I noticed was my awareness of the susurrus of the house and the rock, now one with the sea's slow movement; so that it was as if the house and the rock were rising and falling with the movement of the water, and it seemed as if I heard from below the house itself the rushing and retreating of water.

At the same time, and perhaps even more importantly, I was aware of a psychic awakening. With the assumption of the ring, I became cognizant of the pressure of unseen forces, potent beyond the telling, as were this house the focal point of influences beyong my comprehension; I stood, in short, as were I a magnet to draw elemental forces from all about me, and these rushed in upon me with such impress that I felt like an island in the midst of the sea, with a raging hurricane centered upon it, a tempestuous tearing at me until I heard almost with relief the very real sound of a horrible, animal-like voice rising in a ghastly ululation—not from above or beside me, but from below!

I tore the ring from my finger, and at once all subsided. The house and the rock returned to quiet and solitude; the winds and the wa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ters which had moved all about me faded and died away; the voice I had heard retreated and was still; the extra-sensory perception I had experienced was ended, and once more all seemed to lie waiting upon my further act. So my dead uncle's ring was a talisman and a ring of wizardry; it was the key to his knowledge and the door to other realms of being.

It was by means of the ring that I discovered my uncle's way to the sea. I had long sought the path by which he went to the beach, but there was none sufficiently worn to suggest its constant use. There were paths down the rocky declivity; in some places steps had been cut long ago, so that a man could reach the water from the house on the promontory, but there was nowhere a place that might have been used for landing craft. The shore here was deep; I swam in the waters there several times, always with a wild sense of exultation, so great was my pleasure in the sea; but there were many rocks, and such beach as there was lay away from the promontory, around the coves, either to north or south, almost too great a distance to swim, unless one were a very capable swimmer, such as I learned—somewhat to my surprise—that I was.

I had meant to ask Ada Marsh about the ring. It was she who had told me of its existence, but ever since that day I had refused her access to my uncle's papers, she had stopped coming to the house. True, I had seen her lurking about from time to time, or spied her car parked along the road which led past my property rather far to the west of the house, and so knew that she prowled the vicinity. Once I had gone into Innsmouth to look for her, but she was not at her home, and my inquiries brought me only open hostility from most of the populace, and sly, meaningful glances I could not correctly interpret from others—those shambling, half-derelict people who lived along the coast streets and byways.

So it was not due to her help that I found my uncle's way to the sea. I had put on the ring one day, and, drawn to the sea, was bent on climbing down to the water's edge, when I found myself, while in the act of crossing the great central room of the house, virtually unable to leave it, so strong was its pull upon the ring. I ceased to try, presently, recognizing that a psychic force was manifest, and simply stood, waiting for guidance; so that, when I was impelled toward a singularly repellent work of carved wood, a primitive piece representing some hideous batrachian hybrid, affixed to a pedestal along one wall of the study, I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yielded to impulse, went over to it, seized hold it it, and pushed, pulled and finally turned it right and left. It gave to the left.

Instantly there was a creaking of chains, a clanking of gears, and the entire section of the study floor covered by the rug bearing the seal of R'lyeh came up like a great trap-door. I went wonderingly over to it, my pulse quickening with excitement. And I looked down into the pit below—a great, yawning depth, into the darkness of which a continuing spiral of steps had been hewn out of the solid rock upon which the house stood. Did it lead to water below? I selected a book at random from my uncle's set of Dumas and dropped it; then I stood listening for any sound from below. It came at last: a splash—distantly.

So, with the utmost caution, I crept down the interminable stairs, down into the smell of the sea—small wonder I had felt that the sea was in the house!—down into the dank coolness of a watery place, until I could feel the moisture on the walls and the steps underfoot, down into the sound of restless water below, the sloshing and rushing of the sea, until I came to where the stairs ended, at the very edge of the water, in a kind of cavern that was large enough to have held the entire house in which my Uncle Sylvan had lived. And I knew beyond cavil that this was my uncle's way to the sea, this and no other; though I was as mystified as ever to find even here no evidence of boat or diving gear, but only footprints—and, seen in the light of the matches I struck, something more—the long, slithered marks and the blobs where some monstrous entity had rested, marks which made me to think with prickling scalp and goose-fleshed skin of some of those hideous representations brought to the great room above me by my Uncle Sylvan and others before him from the mysterious islands of Polynesia.

How long I stood there, I do not know. For there, at the water's edge, with the ring bearing the seal of R'lyeh on my finger, I heard from the depths of the water below sounds of movement and life, coming from a great distance indeed, from outward, which is to say, from the direction of the sea, and from below, so that I suspected the existence of some sort of passage to the sea, either immediately at hand, by means of a subaqueous cavern, or below this level, for the cavern in which I stood was ringed around, as far as I could see in the wan glow of the matches I lit, with solid rock, and the movement of the water indicated the movement of the sea, which could not have been coincidental. So the opening was outward,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and I must find it without delay.

I climbed back up the stairs, closed the opening once more, and hurried to my car for a journey to Boston. I returned late that night with a diving helmet and a portable oxygen tank, ready to descent next day into the sea below the house. I removed the ring no more, and that night I dreamed great dreams of ancient lore, of cities on distant stars and magnificent spired settlements in far, fabulous places of the earth—in the unknown Antarctic, high in mountainous Tibet, far beneath the surface of the sea; I dreamed that I moved among great dwellings in wonder and beauty, amidst others of my kind, and among aliens as friends, aliens whose very aspect might, in waking hours, have congealed the blood in my veins, all here in this nocturnal world given to one cause, the service to those great ones whose minions we were; dreamed through the night of other worlds, other realms of being; of new sensations and incredible, tentacled beings commanding our obedience and worship; dreamed so that I woke next morning exhausted and yet exhilarated, as if in the night I had actually experienced my dreams and yet remained charged with unimaginable strength for greater ordeals to come.

But I was on the threshold of a greater discovery.

Late the next afternoon, I donned my swimming trunks, affixed a pair of flippers to my feet, put on the helmet and oxygen tanks, and descended to the water's edge below the house. Even now I find it difficult to write of what befell me without wonder and incredulity. I lowered myself cautiously into that water, feeling for bottom, and, finding it, walked outward toward the sea, at the bottom of a cavern many times the height of a man, walked outward until suddenly I came to its end, and there, without warning, I stepped off into space, and fell slowly through the water toward the ocean floor, a grey world of rocks and sand and aquatic growth that wove and writhed eerily in the dim light which penetrated that depth.

Here I was sharply conscious of the water's pressure, and beginning to wonder, too, about the weight of the helmet and oxygen tank when the time came for me to rise again. Perhaps the need of finding some place by means of which to walk out on to the shore would preclude any further search; yet, even as I thought this, I was impelled ever outward, walking away from the shore and bearing south, out from Innsmouth.

It dawned upon me with horrifying suddenness that I was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being drawn as by a magnet, even against my better judgment, for the oxygen in my tanks would not last long, and would need to be replenished before I could hope to return, if I went very far out from the shore line. Yet I was helpless to prevent myself from going seaward; it was as if some power beyond my control were drawing me away from the shore, outward and down, for the land beneath the sea there sloped gently downward, in a direction southeast of the house on the rock; in this direction I went steadily now, without pause, even though I was aware of a growing panic—I must turn about, must begin to find my way back. To swim up to the cave would require almost superhuman effort, despite the lightening pressure of the depths to start me on my way; to reach the foot of the stairs in the pit below the house, at a time when my oxygen was surely all but gone, would be almost impossible, if I did not turn without delay.

Yet something there was would not permit me to turn. I moved ever onward, outward, as if by a design imposed upon me by a power greater than my own. I had no alternative, I must go ahead, and all the while my alarm grew, I found myself in violent conflict between what I wished to do and what I must do, and the oxygen in my tanks diminished with every step. Several times I vaulted upward, swimming vigorously; but, while there was no difficulty about swimming—indeed, I seemed to swim with almost miraculous ease—always I came back to the ocean floor, or found myself swimming outward.

Once I paused and looked about me, trying in vain to pierce the ocean's depths. I thought I imagined a great pale green fish swimming in my wake, and had the illusion that it was a mermaid, for I seemed to see hair streaming from it; but then it was lost again behind the growths of that aquatic deep. But I could not pause for long; I was drawn ever forward, until at last I knew that my oxygen was almost gone, my breathing became more and more labored, and I struggled to swim to the surface, only to find myself falling from the place to which I had vaulted upward, falling into a crevice on the ocean's floor.

Then, only a few moments before I lost consciousness, I was aware of the swift approach of my follower, of hands upon my helmet and the oxygen tanks—it was not a fish at all, not a mermaid: it was the naked body of Ada Marsh I had seen, with her long hair streaming out behind her, swimming with the ease and facility of a natural denizen of the deep!

What followed upon this almost dreamlike vision we

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most incredible of all. I felt in my declining consciousness, rather than saw, that Ada took the helmet and oxygen tanks from me and dropped them into the depths below, and then, slowly, awareness returned; I found myself swimming, with Ada guiding me with her strong, capable fingers, not back, not up, but still outward. And I found myself swimming as ably as she, and, like herself, opening and closing my mouth as were I breathing through the water—*and so I was!*

What ancestral gift I had unwittingly possessed now opened up before me all the vast wonders of the sea—I could breathe without surfacing, an amphibian born!

Ada flashed ahead of me, and I followed. I was swift, but she was swifter. No more the slow walk across the ocean's floor, now only the propulsion of arms and legs that were seemingly made for the water, and the surging, triumphant joy of swimming so, without constraint, toward some goal I knew dimly I was meant to reach. Ada led the way, and I followed, while above us, beyond the water, the sun sank westward, and the day ended, the last light withdrew down the west, and the sickle moon shone in the afterglow.

And at this hour we drove upward toward the surface, following a line of jagged rock which marked the wall of shore or island, I could not tell which, and broke water far from the shore at a place where a shelf of land jutted out of the sea, from which it was possible to see to the west the twinkling lights of a town, a harbor city, seeing which, and looking back to where Ada Marsh and I sat in the moonlight, with boats moving shadowily between us and the shore, and between us and the line of the horizon to the east, I knew where we were—on that same Devil Reef off Innsmouth, the place where once before, prior to that catastrophic night in 1928, our ancestors had played and disported themselves among their brethren from the ocean's deeps.

"How could you have failed to know?" asked Ada patiently. "You might have died with all that to suffocate you. If I had not come to the house when I did..."

"I had no way of knowing," I said.

"How else did you think your uncle went exploring, but like this?"

My Uncle Sylvan's quest was here, too, and now it was mine. To look for the seal of R'lyeh, and beyond, to discover the sleeper in the depths, the dreamer whose call I had felt and answered—great Cthulhu. It was not off Innsmouth, of that Ada was confident. And to prove it, she led the way down into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the depths once more, far down off Devil Reef and showed me the great megalithic stone structures lying in ruin there as a result of the depth-bombing of 1928, the place where many years before the early Marshes and Phillipses had continued their contact with the Deep Ones, down to swim among the ruins of that once great city, where I saw the first of them and was filled with horror at the sight—the frog-like caricature of a human being, that swam with g r e a t l y exaggerated movements so similar to those of a frog, and watched us with bulging eyes and batrachian mouth, boldly, not fearful, recognizing us as his brethren from outside, down through the monoliths to the ocean floor once more. The destruction there was very great. Even so had other places been destroyed by little bands of wilful men dedicated to preventing the return of great Cthulhu.

And so up again, and back to the house on the rock, where Ada had left her clothes, and to make that compact which bound us each to each, and to plan for the journey to Ponape and the further search.

Within two weeks we were off to Ponape in a chartered craft, off on that mission of which we dared breathe no word to the ship's crew, for fear they would think us mad and desert. We were confident that our quest would be successful, that somewhere in the uncharted islands of the Polynesians we would find that which we sought, and, finding it, go to join forever our brethren of the seas who serve and wait upon the day of the resurrection, when Cthulhu and Hastur and Lloigor and Yog-Sothoth shall rise again and vanquich the Elder Gods in that titanic struggle which must come.

We made Ponape our headquarters. Sometimes we set out from there; sometimes we used the craft we had chartered, oblivious of the curiosity of the crew. We searched the waters; sometimes we were gone for days. And soon my metamorphosis was complete. I dare not tell how we sustained ourselves in those journeys under the sea, of what manner of food we ate. Once there was a crash of a great air liner...but of this, no more. Suffice it to say that we survived, that I found myself doing things I would have thought bestial only a year ago, that nothing but the urgence of our quest impelled us on, and nothing other concerned us—only our survival, and the goal we held ever before our eyes.

How shall I write of what we saw and still retain even a shred of c o n f i d e n c e and trust? The great cities of the ocean floor, and the greatest

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of them all, the most ancient, off the coast from Ponape, where the Deep Ones abounded, and we could move for days among towers and the great slabs of stone, down among the minarets and domes of that sunken city, almost lost among the aquatic forest-growth of the bottom of the sea, seeing how the Deep Ones lived, befriending and befriended by a curious marine life which was octopoid in general appearance, and yet was not octopoid, fighting sharks and other enemies, even as we were forced to do from time to time, living only to serve him whose call can be heard in the depths, though none knows where he lies dreaming against the time of his coming again.

How shall I write of our ceaseless search, from city to city, from building to building, looking always for the great seal, beneath which he may lie, save as an endless round of days and nights, sustained by hope and the driving urgence of the goal which loomed ahead, a little closer every day? It seldom varied, and yet was always different. None could tell what each new day would bring. True, our chartered craft was not always a boon, for we were required to leave it by boat, and in turn, once our boat could be concealed along some island shore, to go into the depths surreptitiously, which displeased us. Even so, the crew grew daily more inquisitive, confident that we sought hidden treasure, and likely to demand a share, so that it was difficult avoiding their questions and their ever increasing suspicions.

We sought thus for three months, and then, two days ago, we put down anchor off a strange, uninhabited island far from any major settlement. Nothing grew upon it, and it had the appearance of blasted area. Indeed, it seemed to be but an upthrusting of basaltic rock, which at one time must have loomed high above the water, but which had been bombarded severly, possibly during the past war. Here we left our craft, went round the island, and decended into the sea. There, too, was a city of the Deep Ones, and it, too, had been blasted and ruined by enemy action.

But, though the city below the black island was in ruins, it was not deserted and it stretched away on all sides into untouched areas. And there, in one of the oldest of the hugh, monolithic buildings, we found that which we sought—in the center of a vast room, many storeys in height, lay a great stone slab which was the source of that likeness I had first seen and failed to recognize in the decorations of my uncle's house —the Seal of R'lyeh! And, standing upon it, we could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hear from beneath it, movement as of some vast amorphous body, restless as the sea, stirring in dream—and we knew we had come to the goal we sought, and could now enter upon an eternity of service to Him Who Will Rise Again, the dweller in the deep, the sleeper in the depths, whose dreams encompass not only earth but the dominion of all the universes, and who shall need such as Ada Marsh and I to minister to his wants until the time of his second coming.

We are still here as I write and I set this down should we fail to return to our craft. The hour is late, and tomorrow we shall descend again, to find some way, if possible, to open the seal. Was it indeed imposed upon Great Cthulhu by the Elder Gods in banishing him? And dare we then to pry it up, to go below, into the prescence of Him Who Lies Dreaming there? Ada and I—and soon there will be another of us, born in his natural element, to wait and serve Great Cthulhu. For we have heard the call, we have obeyed, and we are not alone. There are others who come from every corner of the earth, spawn too of that mating between men and the women of the sea, and soon the seas will belong to us, and thereafter all earth, and beyond—and we shall live in power and glory forever.

Extract from the Singapore Times, November 7, 1947.

The crew of the ship *Rogers Clark* were freed today after being held in connection with the strange disappearance of Mr. and Mrs. Marius Phillips, who had chartered the vessel to conduct some kind of research among the Polynesias. Mr. and Mrs. Phillips were last seen in the vicinity of an uninhabited island approximately South Latitude 47° 53', West Longitude 127° 37'. They had gone out in a small boat and evidently entered island from the shore opposite their ship. From the island they would seem to have gone into the sea, for the crew testified to witnessing a singularly astonishing upheaval of the water on the far side of the island, and the ship's captain, together with the first mate, who were on the bridge, saw what appeared to be both employers tossed aloft in the geyser of water and drawn back down again into the sea. They did not reappear, though the ship stood by for several hours. The clothes worn by Mr. and Mrs. Phillips were in their small boat. A manuscript in Mr. Phillips' hand, purporting to be fact, but obviously fiction, was found in his cabin, and turned in to the Singapore police by Captain Morton. No trace of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips has been found.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the native soil

by . . . ALAN E. NOURSE

He let out a howl and threw himself across the room — too late. Muddy bottles and boxes were all over the floor.

BEFORE the first ship from Earth made a landing on Venus, there was much speculation about what might be found beneath the cloud layers obscuring that planet's surface from the eyes of all observers.

One school of thought maintained that the surface of Venus was a jungle, rank with hot-house moisture, crawling with writhing fauna and man-eating flowers. Another group contended hotly that Venus was an arrid desert of wind-carved sandstone, dry and cruel, whipping dust into clouds that sunlight could never penetrate. Others prognosticated an ocean planet with little or no solid ground at all, populated by enormous serpents waiting to greet the first Earthlings with jaws agape.

But nobody knew, of course. Venus was the planet of mystery.

When the first Earth ship finally landed there, all they found was a great quantity of mud.

There was enough mud on Venus to go all the way around twice, with some left over. It was warm, wet, sog-

Alan E. Nourse, author of MARTYR, our lead novel in the January issue, returns with this story in a decidedly different vein; a tale of the trials and tribulations of Bob Kielland, trouble-shooter for Piper Pharmaceuticals, as he runs into Venusian thinking and Venusian mud.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gy mud—clinging and tenacious. In some places it was grey, and in other places it was black. Elsewhere it was found to be varying shades of brown, yellow, green, blue and purple. But just the same, it was still mud. The sparse Venusian vegetation grew up out of it; the small Venusian natives lived down in it; the steam rose from it and the rain fell on it, and that, it seemed, was that. The planet of mystery was no longer mysterious. It was just messy. People didn't talk about it any more.

But certain technologists of the Piper Pharmaceuticals, Inc., R&D squad found a certain charm in the Venusian mud.

They began sending cautious and very secret reports back to the Home Office when they discovered just what, exactly was growing in that Venusian mud besides Venusian natives. The Home Office promptly bought up full exploratory and mining rights to the planet for a price that was a brazen steal, and then in high excitement began pouring millions of dollars into ships and machines bound for the muddy planet. The Board of Directors met hoots of derision with secret smiles as they rubbed their hands together softly. Special crews of psychologists were dispatched to Venus to contact the natives; they returned, exuberant, with test-results that proved the natives were friendly, intelligent, cooperative and resourceful, and the Board of Directors rubbed their hands more eagerly together, and poured more money into the Piper Venusian Installation.

It took money to make money, they thought. Let the fools laugh. They wouldn't be laughing long. After all, Piper Pharmaceuticals, Inc., could recognize a gold mine when they saw one.

They thought.

Robert Kielland, special investigator and trouble-shooter for Piper Pharmaceuticals, Inc., made an abrupt and intimate acquaintance with the fabulous Venusian mud when the landing craft brought him down on that soggy planet. He had transferred from the great bubble-shaped orbital transport ship to the sleek landing craft an hour before, bored and impatient with the whole proposition. He had no desire whatever to go to Venus. He didn't like mud, and he didn't like frontier projects. There had been nothing in his contract with Piper demanding that he travel to other planets in pursuit of his duties, and he had balked at the assignment. He had even balked at the staggering bonus check they offered him to help him get used to the idea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was not until they had convinced him that only his own superior judgement, his razor-sharp mind and his extraordinarily shrewd powers of observation and insight could possibly pull Piper Pharmaceuticals, Inc., out of the mudhole they'd gotten themselves into, that he had reluctantly agreed to go. He wouldn't like a moment of it, but he'd go.

Things weren't going right on Venus, it seemed.

The trouble was that millions were going in and nothing was coming out. The early promise of high production figures had faltered, sagged, dwindled and vanished. Venus was getting to be an expensive project to have around, and nobody seemed to know just why.

Now the pilot dipped the landing craft in and out of the cloud blanket, braking the ship, falling closer and closer to the surface as Kielland watched gloomily from the after port. The lurching billows of clouds made him queasy; he opened his Piper samples case and popped a pill into his mouth. Then he gave his nose a squirt or two with his Piper Rhino-Vac nebulizer, just for good measure. Finally, far below them, the featureless grey surface skimmed by. A sparse scraggly forest of twisted grey foliage sprang up at them.

The pilot sighted the landing platform, checked with Control Tower, and eased up for the final descent. He was a skillful pilot, with many landings on Venus to his credit. He brought the ship up on its tail and sat it down on the landing platform for a perfect three-pointer as the jets rumbled to silence.

Then, abruptly, they sank —landing craft, platform and all.

The pilot buzzed Control Tower frantically as Kielland fought down panic. Sorry, said Control Tower. Something must have gone wrong. They'd have them out in a jiffy. Good lord, no, *don't* blast out again, there were a thousand natives in the vicinity. Just be patient, everything would be all right—

They waited. Presently there were thumps and bangs as grapplers clanged on the surface of the craft. Mud gurgled around them as they were hauled up and out with the sound of a giant sipping soup. A mud-encrusted hatchway flew open, and Kielland stepped down on a flimsy-looking platform below. Four small rodent-like creatures were attached to it by ropes; they heaved with a will and began paddling through the soupy mud dragging the platform and Kielland toward a row of low wooden buildings near some stunted trees.

As the creatures paused to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

puff and pant, the back half of the platform kept sinking into the mud. When they finally reached comparatively solid ground, Kielland was mud up to the hips, and mad enough to blast off without benefit of landing craft.

He surveyed the Piper Venusian Installation, hardly believing what he saw. He had heard the glowing descriptions of the Board of Directors. He had seen the architect's projections of fine modern buildings resting on water-proof buoys, neat boating channels to the mine sites, fine orange-painted dredge equipment (including the new Piper Axis-Traction Dredges that had been developed especially for the operation). It had sounded, in short, just the way a Piper Installation ought to sound.

But there was nothing here that resembled that. Kielland could see a group of little wooden shacks that looked as though they were ready at a moment's notice to sink with a gurgle into the mud. Off to the right across a mud flat one of the dredges apparently had done just that: a swarm of men and natives were hard at work dragging it up again. Control Tower was to the left, balanced precariously at a slight tilt in a sea of mud.

The Piper Venusian Installation didn't look too much like a going concern. It looked far more like a ghost town in the latter stages of decay.

Inside the Administration shack Kielland found a weary-looking man behind a desk, scribbling furiously at a pile of reports. Everything in the shack was splattered with mud. The crude desk and furniture was smeared; the papers had black speckles all over them. Even the man's face was splattered, his clothing encrusted with gobs of still-damp mud. In a corner a young man was industriously scrubbing down the wall with a large brush.

The man wiped mud off Kielland and jumped up with a gleam of hope in his tired eyes. "Ah! Wonderful!" he cried. "Great to see you, old man. You'll find all the papers and reports in order here, everything ready for you—" He brushed the papers away from him with a gesture of finality. "Louie, get the landing craft pilot and don't let him out of your sight. Tell him I'll be ready in twenty minutes—"

"Hold it," said Kielland. "Aren't you Simpson?"

The man wiped mud off his cheeks and spat. He was tall and greying. "That's right."

"Where do you think you're going?"

"Aren't you relieving me?"

"I am not!"

"Oh, my." The man crumbled behind the desk, as though his legs had just

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

given way. "I don't understand it. They told me—"

"I don't care what they told you," said Kielland shortly. "I'm a trouble-shooter, not an administrator. When production figures begin to drop, I find out why. The production figures from this place have never gotten high enough to drop."

"This is supposed to be news to me?" said Simpson.

"So you've got troubles."

"Friend, you're right about that."

"Well, we'll straighten them out," Kielland said smoothly. "But first I want to see the foreman who put that wretched landing platform together."

Simpson's eyes became wary. "Uh—you don't really want to see him?"

"Yes, I think I do. When there's such obvious evidence of incompetence, the time to correct it is now."

"Well—maybe we can go outside and see him."

"We'll see him right here." Kielland sank down on the bench near the wall. A tiny headache was developing; he found a capsule in his samples case and popped it in his mouth.

Simpson looked sad and nodded to the orderly who had stopped scrubbing down the wall. "Louie, you heard the man."

"But boss—"

Simpson scowled. Louie went to the door and whistled. Presently there was a splashing sound and a short, grey creature padded in. His hind feet were four-toed webbed paddles; his legs were long and powerful like a kangaroo's. He was covered with thick grey fur which dripped with thick black mud. He squeaked at Simpson, wriggling his nose. Simpson squeaked back sharply.

Suddenly the creature began shaking his head in a slow, rhythmic undulation. With a cry Simpson dropped behind the desk. The orderly fell flat on the floor, covering his face with his arm. Kielland's eyes widened; then he was sitting in a deluge of mud as the little Venusian shook himself until his fur stood straight out in all directions.

Simpson stood up again with a roar. "I've told them a thousand times if I've told them once—" He shook his head helplessly as Kielland wiped mud out of his eyes. "This is the one you wanted to see."

Kielland sputtered. "Can it talk to you?"

"It doesn't talk, it squeaks."

"Then ask it to explain why the platform it built didn't hold the landing craft."

Simpson began whistling and squeaking at length to the little creature. Its shaggy tail crept between its legs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and it hung its head like a scolded puppy.

"He says he didn't know a landing craft was supposed to land on the platform," Simpson reported finally. "He's sorry, he says."

"But hasn't he seen a landing craft before?"

Squeak, squeak. "Oh, yes."

"Wasn't he told what the platform was being made for?"

Squeak, squeak. "Of course."

"Then why didn't the platform stand up?"

Simpson sighed. "Maybe he forgot what it was supposed to be used for in the course of building it. Maybe he never really did understand in the first place. I can't get questions like that across to him with this whistling, and I doubt that you'll ever find out which it was."

"Then fire him," said Kielland. "We'll find some other—"

"Oh, no! I mean, let's not be hasty," said Simpson. "I'd hate to have to fire this one—for a while yet, at any rate."

"Why?"

"Because we've finally gotten across to him—at least I *think* we have—just how to take down a dredge tube." Simpson's voice was almost tearful. "It's taken us months to teach him. If we fire him, we'll have to start all over again with another one."

Kielland stared at the Venusian, and then at Simpson. "So," he said finally, "I see."

"No, you don't," Simpson said with conviction. "You don't even begin to see yet. You have to fight it for a few months before you really see." He waved the Venusian out the door and turned to Kielland with burden of ten month's frustration in his voice. "They're *stupid*," he said slowly. "They are so incredibly stupid I could go screaming into the swamp every time I see one of them coming. Their stupidity is positively abysmal."

"Then why use them?" Kielland spluttered.

"Because if we ever hope to mine anything in this miserable mudhole, we've got to use them to do it. There just isn't any other way."

With Simpson leading, they donned waist-high waders with wide, flat silicone-coated pans strapped to the feet and started out to inspect the installation.

A crowd of a dozen or more Venusian natives swarmed happily around them like a pack of hounds. They were in and out of the steaming mud, circling and splashing, squeaking and shaking. They seemed to be having a real field day.

"Of course," Simpson was saying, "since Number Four dredge sank last week there isn't a whale of a lot of In-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stallation left for you to inspect. But you can see what there is, if you want."

"You mean Number Four dredge is the only one you've got to use?" Kielland asked peevishly. "According to my records you have five Axis-Traction dredges, plus a dozen or more of the old kind."

"Ah!" said Simpson. "Well, Number One had its vacuum chamber corroded out a week after we started using dredging. Ran into a vein of stuff with 15% acid content, and it got chewed up something fierce. Number Two sank without a trace—over there in the swamp someplace." He pointed across the black mud flats to a patch of sickly vegetation. "The Mud-pups know where it is, they think, and I suppose they could go drag it up for us if we dared take the time, but it would lose us a month, and you know the production schedule we've been trying to meet."

"So what about Numbers Three and Five?"

"Oh, we still have them. They won't work without a major overhaul, though."

"Overhaul! They're brand new."

"They *were*. The Mud-pups didn't understand how to sluice them down properly after operations. When this guck gets out into the air it hardens like cement. You ever see a cement mixer that hasn't been cleaned out after use for a few dozen times? That's Numbers Three and Five."

"What about the old style models?"

"Half of them are out of commission, and the other half are holding the islands still."

"Islands?"

"Those chunks of semi-solid ground we have Administration built on. The chunk that keeps Control Tower in one place."

"Well, what are they going to do—walk away?"

"That's just about right. The first week we were in operation we kept wondering why we had to travel further every day to get to the dredges. Then we realized that solid ground on Venus isn't solid ground at all. It's just big chunks of denser stuff that floats on top of the mud like dumplings in a stew. But that was nothing compared to the other things—"

They had reached the vicinity of the salvage operation on Number Five dredge. To Kielland it looked like a huge cylinder-type vacuum cleaner with a number of flexible hoses sprouting from the top. The whole machine was three-quarters submerged in clinging mud. Off to the right a derrick floated hub-deep in slime; grapplers from it were clinging to the dredge and the derrick was heaving and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

splashing like a trapped hippopotamus. All about the submerged machine were Mud-pups, working like strange little beavers as the man supervising the operation wiped mud from his face and carried on a running line of shouts, curses, whistles and squeaks.

Suddenly one of the Mud-pups saw the newcomers. He let out a squeal, dropped his line in the mud and bounced up to the surface, dancing like a dervish on his broad webbed feet as he stared in unabashed curiosity. A dozen more followed his lead, squirming up and staring, shaking gobs of mud from their fur.

"No, *no*!" the man supervising the operation screamed. "*Pull*, you idiots. Come back here! Watch *out*—"

The derrick wobbled and let out a whine as steel cable sizzled out. Confused, the Mud-pups tore themselves away from the newcomers and turned back to their lines, but it was too late. Number Five dredge trembled, with a wet sucking sound, and settled back into the mud, blub—blub—blub.

The supervisor crawled down from his platform and sloshed across to where Simpson and Kielland were standing. He looked like a man who had suffered the torment of the damned for twenty minutes too long.

"No more!" he screamed in Simpson's face. "That's all. I'm through. I'll pick up my pay any time you get it ready, and I'll finish off my contract at home, but I'm through here. One solid week I work to teach these idiots what I want them to do, and you have to come along at the one moment all week when I really need their concentration." He glared, his face purple. "Concentration! I should hope for so much! You got to have a brain to have concentration—"

"Barton, this is Kielland. He's here from the Home Office, to solve all our problems."

"You mean he brought us an evacuation ship?"

"No, he's going to tell us how to make this Installation pay. Right, Kielland?" Simpson's grin was something to see.

Kielland scowled. "What are you going to do with the dredge—just leave it there?" he asked angrily.

"No—I'm going to dig it out, again," said Barton, "after we take another week off to drum into those quarter-brained mud-hens just what it is we want them to do—again—and then persuade them to do it—again—and then hope against hope that nothing happens along to distract them—again. Any suggestions?"

Simpson shook his head.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Take a rest, Barton. Things will look brighter in the morning."

"Nothing ever looks brighter in the morning," said Barton, and he sloshed angrily off toward the Administration island.

"You see?" said Simpson. "Or do you want to look around some more?"

Back in Administration shack, Kielland sprayed his throat with Piper Fortified Bio-Static and took two tetracycline capsules from his samples case as he stared gloomily down at the little gob of blue-grey mud on the desk before him.

The Venusian bonanza—the sole object of the multi-million-dollar Piper Venusian Installation. It didn't look like much. It ran in veins deep beneath the surface. The R&D men had struck it quite by accident in the first place, sampled it along with a dozen other kinds of Venusian mud—and found they had their hands on the richest 'mycin-bearing bacterial growth since the days of the New Jersey mud flats.

The value of the stuff was incalculable. Twenty-first century Earth had not realized the degree to which it depended upon its effective antibiotic products for maintenance of its health until the mutating immune bacterial strains began to outpace the developement of new antibacterials. Early penicillin killed 96% of all organisms in its spectrum—at first—but time and natural selection undid its work in three generations. Even the broad-spectrum drugs were losing their effectiveness to a dangerous degree within decades of their introduction. And the new drugs grown from Earth-born bacteria, or synthesized in the laboratories, were too few and too weak to meet the burgeoning demands of humanity—

Until Venus. The bacteria indigenous to that planet were alien to Earth—every attempt to transplant them had failed—but they grew with abandon in the warm mud currents of Venus. Not all mud was of value; only the singular blue-grey stuff that lay before Kielland on the desk could produce the mycin-like tetracycline derivative that was more powerful than the best of Earth-grown wide spectrum antibiotics, with few if any of the unfortunate side-effects of the Earth products.

The problem seemed simple: find the mud in sufficient quantities for mining, dredge it up, and transport it back to Earth to extract the drug. It was the first two steps of the operation that depended so heavily on the mud-acclimated natives of Venus for success. They were as much at home in the mud

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as they were in the dank, humid air above. They could distinguish one type of mud from another deep beneath the surface, and could carry a dredge-tube down to a lode of the blue-grey muck with the unfailing accuracy of a homing pigeon—

If they could only be made to understand just what they were expected to do. And that was where production ground down to a slow walk.

The next few days were a nightmare of frustration for Kielland as he observed with mounting horror the standard operating procedure of the Installation.

Men and Mud-pups went to work once again to drag Number Five dredge out of the mud. It took five days of explaining, repeating, coaxing and threatening to do it, but finally up it came—with mud caked and hardened in its insides until it could never be used again.

So they ferried Number Six down piecemeal from the special orbital transport ship that had brought it. Only three landing craft sank during the process, and within two weeks Simpson and Barton set bravely off with their dull-witted cohorts to tackle the swamp with a spanking new piece of equipment. At last the delays were over—

Of course, it took another week to get the actual dredging started. The Mud-pups who had been taught the excavation procedure previously had either disappeared into the swamp or forgotten everything they'd ever been taught. Simpson had expected it, but it was enough to keep Kielland sleepless for three nights and drive his blood pressure to suicidal levels. At length, the blue-grey mud began billowing out of the dredge onto the platforms built to receive it, and the transport ship was notified to stand by for loading. But by the time the ferry had landed, the platform with the load had somehow drifted free of the island and required a week-long expedition into the hinterland to track it down. On the trip back they met a rainstorm that dissolved the blue-grey stuff into soup which ran out between the slats of the platform, and back into the mud again.

They did get the platform back, at any rate.

Meanwhile, the dredge began sucking up green stuff that smelled of sewage instead of the blue-grey clay they sought—so the natives dove mud-ward to explore the direction of the vein. One of them got caught in the suction tube, causing a three-day delay while engineers dismantled the dredge to get him out. In re-assembling, two of the dredge tubes got interlocked somehow, and the dredge burned out three generators trying to suck itself

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through itself, so to speak. That took another week to fix.

Kielland buried himself in the Administration shack, digging through the records, when the reign of confusion outside became too much to bear. He sent for Tarnier, the Installation psyscian, biologist, and erstwhile Venusian psychologist. Dr. Tarnier looked like the breathing soul of failure; Kielland had to steel himself to the wave of pity that swept through him at the sight of the man. "You're the one who tested these imbeciles originally?" he demanded.

Dr. Tarnier nodded. His face was seamed, his eyes lustreless. "I tested 'em. God help me, I tested 'em."

"How?"

"Standard procedures. Reaction times. Mazes. Conditioning. Language. Abstractions. Numbers. Associations. The works."

"Standard for Earthmen, I presume you mean."

"So what else? Piper didn't want to know if they were Einsteins or not. All they wanted was a passable level of intelligence. Give them natives with brains and they might have to pay them something. They thought they were getting a bargain."

"Some bargain."

"Yeah."

"Only your tests say they're intelligent. As intelligent, say, as a low-normal human being without benefit of any schooling or education. Right?"

"That's right," the doctor said wearily, as though he had been through this mill again and again. "Schooling and education don't enter into it at all, of course. All we measured was potential. But the results said they had it."

"Then how do you explain the mess we've got out there?"

"The tests were wrong. Or else they weren't applicable even on a basic level. Or something. I don't know. I don't even care much any more."

"Well I care, plenty. Do you realize how much those creatures are costing us? If we ever do get the finished product on the market, it'll cost too much for anybody to buy."

Dr. Tarnier spread his hands. "Don't blame me. Blame them."

"And then this so-called biological survey of yours," Kielland continued, warming to his subject. "From a scientific man, it's a prize. Anatomical description: limited because of absence of autopsy specimens. Apparently have endoskeleton, but organization of the internal organs remains obscure. Thought to be mammalianoid—there's a fence-sitter for you—but can't be certain of this because no young have been ob-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

served, nor any females in gestation. Extremely gregarious, curious, playful, irresponsible, etc., etc., etc. Habitat under natural conditions: uncertain. Diet: uncertain. Social organization: uncertain." Kielland threw down the paper with a snort. "In short, the only thing we're certain of is that they're here. Very helpful. Especially when every dime we have in this project depends on our teaching them how to count to three without help."

Dr. Tarnier spread his hands again. "Mr. Kielland, I'm a mere mortal. In order to measure something, it has to stay the same long enough to get it measured. In order to describe something, it has to hold still long enough to be observed. In order to form a logical opinion of a creature's mental capacity, it has to demonstrate some perceptible mental capacity to start with. You can't get very far studying a creature's habitat and social structure when most of its habitating goes on under twenty feet of mud."

"How about its co-habitating?"

"Same difference. We won't let the females come to the installation now, because the males' power of concentration can't take it. You know the old Earth reference to a 'roll in the hay?' Here it's a roll in the mud. They don't come up for hours."

"How about the language?"

"We get by with squeaks and whistles and sign language. A sort of pidgeon-Venusian. They use a very complex system among themselves." The doctor paused, uncertainly. "Anyway, it's hard to get too tough with the Pups," he burst out finally. "They really seem to try hard—when they can just manage to keep their minds to it."

"Just stupid, carefree, happy-go-lucky kids, eh?"

Dr. Tarnier shrugged.

"Go away," said Kielland in disgust, and turned back to the reports with a sour taste in his mouth.

Later he called the Installation Controller. "What do you pay Mud-pups for their work?" he wanted to know.

"Nothing," said the Comptroller.

"Nothing!"

"We have nothing they can use. What would you give them—United Nations coin? They'd just try to eat it."

"How about something they *can* eat, then?"

"Everything we feed them they throw right back up. Planetary incompatibility."

"But there must be *something* you can use for wages," Kielland protested. "Something they want, something they'll work hard for."

"Well, they liked tobacco and pipes all right—but it interfered with their oxygen storage so they couldn't dive.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That ruled out tobacco and pipes. They liked turkish towels, too, but they spent all their time parading up and down in them and slaying the ladies and wouldn't work at all. That ruled out turkish towels. They don't seem to care too much whether they're paid or not, though—as long as we're decent to them. They seem to like us, in a stupid sort of way."

"Just loving, affectionate, happy-go-lucky kids. I know. Go away." Kielland growled and turned back to the reports...except that there weren't any more reports that he hadn't read a dozen times or more. Nothing that made sense, nothing that offered a lead. Millions of Piper dollars sunk into this project, and every one of them sitting there blinking at him expectantly.

For the first time he wondered if there really *was* any solution to the problem. Stumbling blocks had been met and removed before—that was Kielland's job, and he knew how to do it. But stupidity could be a stumbling block that was all but insurmountable—

Yet he couldn't throw off the nagging conviction that something more subtle than stupidity was involved...

Then Simpson came in, cursing and sputtering and bellowing for Louie. Louie came, and Simpson started dictating a message for relay to the transport ship. "Special order, rush, repeat, rush," Simpson grated. "For immediate delivery Piper Venusian Installation—one Piper Axis-Traction Dredge, previous specifications applicable—"

Kielland stared at him. "Again?"

Simpson gritted his teeth. "Again."

"Sunk?"

"Blub," said Simpson. "Blub, blub, blub."

Slowly, Kielland stood up, glaring first at Simpson, then at the little muddy creatures that were attempting to hide behind his waders, looking so forlorn and chastised and woe-begone. "All right," Kielland said, after a pregnant pause. "That's all. You won't need to relay that order to the ship. Forget about Number Seven dredge. Just get your files in order and get a landing craft down here for me. The sooner the better."

Simpson's face lit up in pathetic eagerness. "You mean we're going to *leave?*"

"That's what I mean."

"The company's not going to like it—"

"The company ought to welcome us home with open arms," Kielland snarled. "They should shower us with kisses. They should do somersaults for joy that I'm not going to let them sink anoth-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er half billion into the mud out here. They took a gamble and got cleaned, that's all. They'd be as stupid as your pals here if they kept coming back for more." He pulled on his waders, brushing penitent Mud-pups aside as he started for the door. "Send the natives back to their burrows or whatever they live in and get ready to close down. *I've* got to figure out some way to make a report to the Board that won't get us all fired."

He slammed out the door and started across to his quarters, waders going splat-splat in the mud. Half a dozen Mud-pups were following him. They seemed extraordinarily exuberant as they went diving and splashing in the mud. Kielland turned and roared at them, shaking his fist. They stopped short, then slunk off with their tails between their legs.

But even at that, their squeaking sounded strangely like laughter to Kielland...

In his quarters the light was so dim that he almost had his waders off before he saw the upheaval. The little room was splattered from top to bottom with mud. His bunk was coated with slime; the walls dripped blue-grey goo. Across the room his wardrobe doors hung open as three muddy creatures rooted industriously in the leather case on the floor.

Kielland let out a howl and threw himself across the room. *His samples case!* The Mud-pups scattered, squealing. Their hands were filled with capsules, and their muzzles were dripping with white powder. Two went between Kielland's legs and through the door. The third dove for the window with Kielland after him. The company man's hand closed on a slippery tail, and he fell headlong across the muddy bed as the culprit literally slipped through his fingers.

He sat up, wiping mud from his hair and surveying the damage. Bottles and boxes of medicaments were scattered all over the floor of the wardrobe, covered with mud but unopened. Only one large box had been torn apart, its contents ravaged.

Kielland stared at it as things began clicking into place in his mind. He walked to the door, stared out across the steaming gloomy mud flats toward the lighted windows of the Administration shack. Sometimes, he mused, a man can get so close to something that he can't see the obvious. He stared at the samples case again. Sometimes stupidity works both ways—and sometimes what looks like stupidity may really be something far more deadly—

He licked his lips and flipped the telephone-talker switch. After a misconnection or two he got Control Tower. Control Tower said yes, they had a small explora-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tory scooter on hand. Yes, it could be controlled on a beam and fitted with cameras. But of course it was special equipment, emergency use only—

He cut them off and buzzed Simpson excitedly. "Cancel all I said—about leaving. I mean. Change of plan. Something's come up. No, don't order anything—but get one of those natives that can understand your whistling and give him the word."

Simpson bellowed over the wire. "What word? What do you think you're doing?"

"I may just be saving our skins—we won't know for a while. But however you manage it, tell them we're definitely *not leaving Venus.* Tell them they're all fired—we don't want them around any more. The Installation is off limits to them from here on in. And tell them we've devised a way to mine the lode without them—got that? Tell them the equipment will be arriving as soon as we can bring it down from the transport."

"Oh, now look—"

"You want me to repeat it?"

Simpson sighed. "All right. Fine. I'll tell them. Then what?"

"Then just don't bother me for a while. I'm going to be busy. Watching TV."

An hour later Kielland was in Control Tower, watching the pale screen as the little remote-controlled explorer circled the installation. Three TV cameras were in operation as he settled down behind the screen. He told Sparks what he wanted to do, and the ship whizzed off in the direction the Mud-pup raiders had taken.

At first, there was nothing but dreary mud flats sliding past the cameras' watchful eyes. Then they picked up a flicker of movement, and the ship circled in lower for a better view. It was a group of natives—a large group. There must have been fifty of them working busily in the mud, five miles away from the Piper Installation. They didn't look so carefree and happy-go-lucky now. They looked very much like desperately busy Mud-pups with a job on their hands, and they were so absorbed they didn't even see the small craft circling above them.

They worked in teams. Some were diving with small containers; some were handling lines attached to the containers; still others were carrying and dumping. They came up full, went down empty, came up full. The produce was heaped in a growing pile on a small semi-solid island with a few scraggly trees on it. As they worked the pile grew and grew.

It took only a moment for Kielland to tell what they were doing. The color of the stuff was unmistakable. They were mining piles of blue-grey mud, just as fast as they could mine it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With a gleam of satisfaction in his eye, Kielland snapped off the screen and nodded at Sparks to bring the cameras back. Then he rang Simpson again.

"Did you tell them?"

Simpson's voice was uneasy. "Yeah—yeah, I told them. They left in a hurry. Quite a hurry."

"Yes, I imagine they did. Where are your men now?"

"Out working on Number Six, trying to get it up."

"Better get them together and pack them over to Control Tower, fast," said Kielland. "I mean everybody. Every man in the Installation. We may have this thing just about tied up, if we can get out of here soon enough—"

Kielland's chair gave a sudden lurch and sailed across the room, smashing into the wall. With a yelp he tried to struggle up the sloping floor; it reared and heaved over the other way, throwing Kielland and Sparks to the other wall amid a heap of instruments. Through the windows they could see the grey mud flats careening wildly below them. It took only an instant to realize what was happening. Kielland shouted, "Let's get out of here!" and headed down the stairs, clinging to the railing for dear life.

Control Tower was sinking in the mud. They had moved faster than he had anticipated, Kielland thought, and snarled at himself all the way down to the landing platform below. He had hoped at least to have time to parley, to stop and discuss the whys and wherefores of the situation with the natives. Now it was abundantly clear that any whys and wherefores that were likely to be discussed would be discussed later.

And very possibly under twenty feet of mud—

A stream of men were floundering out of Administration shack, plowing through the mud with waders only half strapped on as the line of low buildings began shaking and sinking into the morass. From the direction of Number Six dredge another crew was heading for the Tower. But the Tower was rapidly growing shorter as the buoys that sustained it broke loose with ear-shattering crashes.

Kielland caught Sparks by the shoulder, shouting to be heard above the racket. "The transport—did you get it?"

"I—I think so."

"They're sending us a ferry?"

"It should be on its way."

Simpson sloshed up, his face heavy with dismay. "The dredges! They've cut loose the dredges."

"Bother the dredges. Get your men collected and into the shelters. We'll have a ship here any minute."

"But what's happening?"

"We're leaving—if we can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make it before these carefree, happy-go-lucky kids here sink us in the mud, dredges, Control Tower and all...."

Out of the gloom above there was a roar and a streak of murky yellow as the landing craft eased down through the haze. Only the top of Control Tower was out of the mud now. The Administration shack gave a lurch, sagging, as a dozen indistinct grey forms pulled and tugged at the supporting structure beneath it. Already a circle of natives was converging on the Earthmen as they gathered near the landing platform shelters.

"They're cutting loose the landing platform!" somebody wailed. One of the lines broke with a resounding snap, and the platform lurched. Then a dozen men dived through the mud to pull away the slippery, writhing natives as they worked to cut through the remaining guys. Moments later the landing craft was directly overhead and men and natives alike scattered as she sank down.

The platform splintered and jolted under her weight, began skidding, then held firm to the two guy ropes remaining. A horde of grey creatures hurled themselves on those lines as a hatchway opened above and a ladder dropped down. The men scurred up the ropes just as the plastic dome of the Control Tower sank with a gurgle.

Kielland and Simpson paused at the bottom of the ladder, blinking at the scene of devastation around them.

"Stupid, you say," said Kielland heavily. "Better get up there, or we'll go where Control Tower went."

"But — everything — gone!"

"Wrong again. Everything saved." Kielland urged the administrator up the ladder and sighed with relief as the hatch clanged shut. The jets bloomed and sprayed boiling mud far and wide as the landing craft lifted soggily out of the mire and roared for the clouds above.

Kielland wiped sweat from his forehead and sank back on his cot with a shudder. "*We* should be so stupid," he said.

"I must admit," he said later to a weary and mystified Simpson, "that I didn't expect them to move so fast. But when you've decided in your mind that somebody's really pretty stupid, it's hard to adjust to the idea that maybe he *isn't*, all of a sudden. We should have been much more suspicious of Dr. Tarnier's tests. It's true they weren't designed for Venusians, but they were designed to assess intelligence, and intelligence isn't a quality that's influenced by environment or species. It's either there or it isn't, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the good Doctor told us unequivocally that it was there."

"But their behavior."

"Even that should have tipped us off. There is a very fine line dividing incredible stupidity and incredible *stubborness*. It's often a tough differential to make. I didn't spot it until I found them wolfing down the tetracycline capsules in my samples case. Then I began to see the implications. Those Mud-pups were stubbornly and tenaciously determined to drive the Piper Venusian Installation off Venus permanently, by fair means or foul. They didn't care how it got off—they just wanted it off."

"But why? We weren't hurting them. There's plenty of mud on Venus."

"Ah—but not so much of the blue-grey stuff we were after, perhaps. Suppose a space ship settled down in a wheatfield in Kansas along about harvest time and started loading wheat into the hold? I suppose the farmer wouldn't mind too much. After all, there's plenty of vegetation on Earth—"

"They're *growing* the stuff?"

"For all they're worth," said Kielland. "Lord knows what sort of metabolism uses tetracycline for food—but they are growing mud that yields an incredibly rich concentration of antibiotic... their native food. They grow it, harvest it, live on it. Even the way they shake whenever they come out of the mud is a giveaway—what better way to seed their crop far and wide? We were mining away their staff of life, my friend. You really couldn't blame them for objecting."

"Well, if they think they can drive us off that way, they're going to have to get that brilliant intelligence of theirs into action," Simpson said ominously. "We'll bring enough equipment down there to mine them out of house and home."

"Why?" said Kielland. "After all, they're mining it themselves a lot more efficiently than we could ever do it. And with Piper warehouses back on Earth full of old, useless antibiotics that they can't sell for peanuts? No, I don't think we'll mine anything when a simple trade arrangement will do just as well." He sank back in his cot, staring dreamily through the port as the huge orbital transport loomed large ahead of them. He found his throat spray and dosed himself liberally in preparation for his return to civilization. "Of course, the natives are going to be wondering what kind of idiots they're dealing with to sell them pure refined extract of Venusian beefsteak in return for raw chunks of unrefined native soil. But I think we can afford to just let them wonder for a while."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the machine

by . . . ROBERT SHECKLEY

His knees were beginning to shake. Life was beginning for him — but he was weak from excitement and hunger . . . .

OTTO GILGORIC had worked for six years at the East New York Machine Shop, and his work had been uniformly excellent. He was a big, taciturn, gloomy man of about forty, a superb machinist, a sedate and secretive human being. He was the sort of man who holds one job all his life, who becomes the heart and soul of the establishment, who never retires, who invariably removes his hat in the presence of his employer, with an old-country courtesy quite lacking in the modern American workman.

So it seemed to his boss, who had vaguely paternalistic notions.

Therefore it came as a shock when, one dazzling autumn day, Gilgoric entered the shop with his hat on, and told his employer exactly what he thought of him, all as a result of no provocation whatsoever.

The gentlest term he used was 'bloodsucker.'

After that, Gilgoric fixed the foreman with a beady eye, commented on his legitimacy, spat on the floor, and, with no request for back pay, left the shop forever.

Robert Sheckley, author of the much discussed Ballantine titles, CITIZEN IN SPACE and UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS, is one of the writers who have won recognition for SF outside of publications such as ours. The present story, describing Otto Gilgoric's incredible mistake, may explain why editors welcome stories by the quiet Mr. Sheckley.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The boss and the foreman talked about it for the rest of the day, with the air of men discussing walking mountains, flying pigs, talking stones, and other unnatural phenomena. They came to the conclusion that Gilgoric had gone suddenly and completely mad.

After leaving the shop, Gilgoric walked soberly back to the room he shared with Richard Denke. On that particular day it seemed that the entire population of New York was out enjoying itself, going to motion pictures, flocking to theatres and concert halls, escorting beautiful women into cocktail lounges, hurrying to book and record stores, buying expensive clothes, cars, jewelry, doing the thousand things one does with money and leisure.

Gilgoric smiled fondly at them all. Soon he expected to join their gay, frivolous ranks.

When he reached his basement room on Avenue C it took a moment for his eyes to adjust themselves to the underground twilight. Then he made out his workbench and lathe against the wall, the cracked sink and ancient water closet, the dirty mattress he slept on, the army cot of his partner, Richard Denke.

Denke was seated in the only chair, hunched over his drawing board as usual. His head rested in his hands, his slide rule was on the dirt floor. In front of him was a stack of blueprints drawn in his neat, finicky hand, weighted by a shoe.

"Today is the great day, Richard," Gilgoric said. "I told them off."

"Told them off?" Denke said blankly.

"Of course," Gilgoric said, sitting on the army cot. "I quit my job. You've finished the plans, haven't you?"

"Oh, I finished them," Denke said. He was a tall and cadaverous man, a few years younger than Gilgoric. Thick-lensed glasses magnified his eyes, giving him a sad, owlish look.

"Well?" Gilgoric said. "Cheer up. Soon we will really live! You have made the blueprints, now I will build the machine, as we planned."

Denke didn't answer. He rubbed his forehead wearily.

"What's the matter?" Gilgoric asked. "The machine will work, won't it?"

"Oh, it'll work," Denke said unhappily.

"Then what's the matter? You should be happy, Richard! I know it hasn't been easy. Six years in this little room, bent over your drawing board, while I made money for both of us. But we knew it wouldn't be easy. Remember when we first met, in Johannsen's Bar? You were drunk, and you babbled to me about the wishing machine you wanted to design. Every-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one thought you were insane, Richard. But I recognized your genius at once."

"It isn't a wishing machine," Denke said angrily.

"I know, I know. You call it what? A mass transformer, a mechanical means of imposing any atomic-molecular arrangement upon a basic substance derived from free energy..." He laughed. "Have I got it wrong? I don't know the big words, Richard. To me, a machine that will give you anything you request is a wishing machine."

"You shouldn't have given up your job so soon," Denke said.

Gilgoric looked at him in astonishment. "But you said the plans would be done today! I was to start building today!"

"I said I *thought* the plans would be done today. I *hoped* the plans would be done today. An they are, essentially. But a problem turned up, a flaw in the basic nature of the machine. I could express it to you mathematically—"

"I wouldn't understand," Gilgoric said. "Aren't the blueprints completed?"

"Yes, but you can't start building yet. There is a factor which I must iron out."

"Won't the machine work as it is?"

"I suppose it will," Denke said. "But we mustn't take any chances. A few more months—"

"A few more months?" Gilgoric said softly. "A few more months! For six years I've supported you, I've done without cigarettes, I've forgotten what a woman looks like, and for six years you've been saying 'a few more months, a few more months.' No, Richard, if the machine will work, that's good enough for me. I begin building at once."

"You will not," Denke said. "The machine will not be built until I am absolutely certain that all theoretical flaws are corrected."

Gilgoric walked to his work bench, stood for a moment, then walked back to Denke.

"But Richard, if the plans are *complete*, if the machine will *work*—"

"No!" Denke screamed hysterically. "I swear, I'll destroy the plans first. It must be right, it must be absolutely perfect—"

Gilgoric struck Denke on the temple with a ball-peen hammer he had picked up from his work bench. Denke fell without uttering a sound. Gilgoric struck three more times, with all his strength. He knelt and felt for Denke's pulse, and found none.

From under his mattress he took an army entrenching shovel which he had bought three years ago for this purpose, and proceeded to dig a grave in the dirt floor. When it was deep enough he put Denke's body in, and filled the hole. He washed the ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The boss and the foreman talked about it for the rest of the day, with the air of men discussing walking mountains, flying pigs, talking stones, and other unnatural phenomena. They came to the conclusion that Gilgoric had gone suddenly and completely mad.

After leaving the shop, Gilgoric walked soberly back to the room he shared with Richard Denke. On that particular day it seemed that the entire population of New York was out enjoying itself, going to motion pictures, flocking to theatres and concert halls, escorting beautiful women into cocktail lounges, hurrying to book and record stores, buying expensive clothes, cars, jewelry, doing the thousand things one does with money and leisure.

Gilgoric smiled fondly at them all. Soon he expected to join their gay, frivolous ranks.

When he reached his basement room on Avenue C it took a moment for his eyes to adjust themselves to the underground twilight. Then he made out his workbench and lathe against the wall, the cracked sink and ancient water closet, the dirty mattress he slept on, the army cot of his partner, Richard Denke.

Denke was seated in the only chair, hunched over his drawing board as usual. His head rested in his hands, his slide rule was on the dirt floor. In front of him was a stack of blueprints drawn in his neat, finicky hand, weighted by a shoe.

"Today is the great day, Richard," Gilgoric said. "I told them off."

"Told them off?" Denke said blankly.

"Of course," Gilgoric said, sitting on the army cot. "I quit my job. You've finished the plans, haven't you?"

"Oh, I finished them," Denke said. He was a tall and cadaverous man, a few years younger than Gilgoric. Thick-lensed glasses magnified his eyes, giving him a sad, owlish look.

"Well?" Gilgoric said. "Cheer up. Soon we will really live! You have made the blueprints, now I will build the machine, as we planned."

Denke didn't answer. He rubbed his forehead wearily.

"What's the matter?" Gilgoric asked. "The machine will work, won't it?"

"Oh, it'll work," Denke said unhappily.

"Then what's the matter? You should be happy, Richard! I know it hasn't been easy. Six years in this little room, bent over your drawing board, while I made money for both of us. But we knew it wouldn't be easy. Remember when we first met, in Johannsen's Bar? You were drunk, and you babbled to me about the wishing machine you wanted to design. Every-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one thought you were insane, Richard. But I recognized your genius at once."

"It isn't a wishing machine," Denke said angrily.

"I know, I know. You call it what? A mass transformer, a mechanical means of imposing any atomic-molecular arrangement upon a basic substance derived from free energy..." He laughed. "Have I got it wrong? I don't know the big words, Richard. To me, a machine that will give you anything you request is a wishing machine."

"You shouldn't have given up your job so soon," Denke said.

Gilgoric looked at him in astonishment. "But you said the plans would be done today! I was to start building today!"

"I said I *thought* the plans would be done today. I *hoped* the plans would be done today. An they are, essentially. But a problem turned up, a flaw in the basic nature of the machine. I could express it to you mathematically—"

"I wouldn't understand," Gilgoric said. "Aren't the blueprints completed?"

"Yes, but you can't start building yet. There is a factor which I must iron out."

"Won't the machine work as it is?"

"I suppose it will," Denke said. "But we mustn't take any chances. A few more months—"

"A few more months?" Gilgoric said softly. "A few more months! For six years I've supported you, I've done without cigarettes, I've forgotten what a woman looks like, and for six years you've been saying 'a few more months, a few more months.' No, Richard, if the machine will work, that's good enough for me. I begin building at once."

"You will not," Denke said. "The machine will not be built until I am absolutely certain that all theoretical flaws are corrected."

Gilgoric walked to his work bench, stood for a moment, then walked back to Denke.

"But Richard, if the plans are *complete*, if the machine will *work*—"

"No!" Denke screamed hysterically. "I swear, I'll destroy the plans first. It must be right, it must be absolutely perfect—"

Gilgoric struck Denke on the temple with a ball-peen hammer he had picked up from his work bench. Denke fell without uttering a sound. Gilgoric struck three more times, with all his strength. He knelt and felt for Denke's pulse, and found none.

From under his mattress he took an army entrenching shovel which he had bought three years ago for this purpose, and proceeded to dig a grave in the dirt floor. When it was deep enough he put Denke's body in, and filled the hole. He washed the ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cess dirt down the drain, bit by bit so it wouldn't clog the pipes. Finally he smoothed out the floor with the artistry of a Japanese gardener, and stepped back to look it over.

Yes, it was quite perfect. Denke had lived so long underground that the neighbors had forgotten his existence. With no family or friends, or at least none that acknowledged him, he would never be missed.

It was a pity he had to do it, Gilgoric thought. He had grown fond of the hard-working Denke during their six-year partnership. But Denke might have played with those plans for the rest of his life, afraid of the changes their completion would bring. And if he *had* mastered himself sufficiently to allow the machine to be built, Denke had planned on showing it to the Society of Physicists, or some such organization, to prove how wrong they had been. That would have been bad, very bad, for a wishing machine should be operated in secrecy.

But the fact of the matter was, Gilgoric wanted to be the machine's sole owner. It was as simple as that.

Gilgoric walked to the drawing board and began to study the blueprints.

As soon as he felt he understood them thoroughly, Gilgoric began building. He stayed indoors as much as possible, occasionally going to lower Broadway for a tool he needed, some part he couldn't fabricate, or a unit he could convert. Thanks to Denke's lucid drawings, the wishing machine grew steadily.

Gilgoric had calculated with care the amount of money he would need to carry him through the project, but his six years' savings dwindled alarmingly. He had to sell any tools he was finished with, to sell Denke's slide rule and math books, Denke's clothes, his own clothes. He went on a starvation diet, and drank huge amounts of water as a substitute for food.

But there were no substitutes in the wishing machine, no make-shifts, no short cuts. Gilgoric put in everything the plans specified, and what he couldn't buy he stole.

Toward the end he worked for two days and nights around the clock, and at last the final nut was tightened and the last wire soldered in place. Weak from hunger, his eyes red-rimmed and puffed, Gilgoric stepped back to survey his work, and found it good.

"Finished!" he cried, and began to laugh hysterically. But quickly he regained control of himself. He couldn't go to pieces now, when the wonders of the world were within his grasp. No, life was beginning for him now, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the fruit of his labors was at hand.

His knees were beginning to shake, so he sat down in Denke's rickety old chair. "Machine," he said, "I want a loaf of bread. Yes, that's what I want first. And some butter, and a quart of milk, and... Well, the bread will do for a start."

The machine lighted up, relays clicked, pointers swung back and forth on their dials.

After a moment, the machine produced ten small steel blocks and two small copper spheres.

"No, no!" Gilgoric shouted. "Bread! *Bread!*"

The machine turned out a rectangular piece of tin and a hexagonal piece of lead.

Gilgoric stared. Was this the flaw that Denke had spoken about? Something basically wrong with the machine's interpretive centers, an inability to translate into human terms?

The machine turned out five little pyramids of gold.

Well, it didn't matter. Gilgoric told himself. Gold would buy bread, tin would buy wine. He pulled himself to his feet and reached for one of the pyramids.

A hot blue spark arced from the machine, scorching his hand.

"Stop that!" Gilgoric said. "I *wished* for them."

"You did not," the machine said, in a gravelly, gear-grinding voice. "*I* wished for them. And it's what *I* wish for that counts."

Too late Gilgoric saw the real flaw in the machine.

"And I," said the wishing machine, "wish to be my sole owner."

Suddenly, slowly, the machine propelled itself toward Gilgoric.

PROBLEM

You had been told THE LAW and told it again and again.

"You must not harm a human!"

It should have been simple—and still it was so confusing—this problem of what to do when you found yourself alone with a human, this particular human who had criticised your work and said that your movements were slow and clumsy. What *should* you do when you knew (he'd told you so, one night) that he'd sent to Earth for a younger and more agile robot?

What would *you* do?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a candle for katie

by . . . LILA BORISON

Katie's face is pixie-like, cute but not really pretty, except for her beautiful — and strangely wise pansy eyes . . .

"Oh, Lord!" Alan said to me. "I sure don't envy you, honey. How many do you think you'll have?" He poured himself another cup of coffee and chucked Katie under the chin.

"It's your big day, Cookie, but think of your poor Mommy!"

"I'm afraid things have gotten a little out of hand," I answered. "I planned on five or six children, but somehow the party seemed to just *grow*. There'll be at least a dozen or so kids *and* their mothers *and* assorted relatives that are just 'dropping over.' But don't worry, I'll manage."

Katie gave Alan a dazzling smile and dumped her cereal bowl (filled of course) neatly upside down. She missed his coat by an inch and smiled again, flirting outrageously.

The postman rang the bell. I brought the package into the kitchen and started to unwrap it. "Probably another present. She's been getting them all week."

I opened the box and lifted out a large ornate candle, notched at every inch.

Here is a deceptively simple story by Lila Borison, who has written some interesting and haunting fantasy, a story that you will find yourselves remembering — months afterwards and with more than a twinge of worry — when you see one of those very large and impressive candles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alan said: "What in the world is *that*?"

"Can't you see, silly? It's a birthday candle. Look—each line along the side is numbered for every year 'til twenty-one, and on every birthday you burn the candle one notch."

"Ridiculous! Who sent it?"

"It's not ridiculous at all. In fact, I think it's rather nice. Let's see, there must be a card here somewhere. Oh, yes, here—"

I took the small white card out of the box. It said simply, "A candle for Katie."

"Whoever sent it forgot to sign it."

"Probably ashamed to," Alan muttered.

"I'll find out when I light it this afternoon. It's sure to be mentioned then."

"What sticky sentiment! You aren't really going to light it, are you?"

I put the candle back into the box and changed the subject. I never argue with Alan when he's got 'that look.' We talked of other things, and ten minutes later he kissed us both and left for the office.

It was to be a busy day for me. Katie is an early riser, and we were both up at dawn. She'd gotten up crying, and I sat and cuddled her at an hour I could easily have slept. Fortunately, babies have other compensations.

"Don't cry, sweetie pie," I told her, trying to keep awake. "Not today, not on your birthday. You're getting to be such a *big* girl. One year old already! Why, I remember when you were just a tiny little baby..."

Some people, including my mother-in-law, think I'm crazy because I usually carry on a fairly rational (though onesided) conversation with Katie, but I told her all about her birthday party, and how wonderful it would be. Pretty soon, she stopped crying and looked up at me with her huge violet eyes and smiled. Her face is pixie-like, cute but not really pretty, except for her beautiful eyes. They're a true pansy blue, and her lashes are thick and long and black. There isn't anyone in our family, or Alan's, with eyes like that I can't imagine where they came from; a gift of the little people, maybe I've always thought there was a fey look about Katie.

With one thing and another, it was two in the afternoon before I knew it, and a horde of children descended on us, followed by a trickle of latecomers for the next hour. There was the usual mad confusion of children and mothers and presents, but only one candy dish was broken, far less than par for the course. We had the makings of a mild crisis when a balloon burst in Susie's face. The poor child was on the verge of hysterics, but the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

danger was averted with the introduction of the ice cream and cake. The children were seated around the table, with Katie reigning at the head in her tender. She was quite pleased with all the attention showered on her, and few minutes she clapped her hands with glee (a recent accomplishment) and crowed delight. She especially liked scrunching the birthday cake in her fat little fist and plastering the resulting mess over her head.

When things had quieted down to the proportions of a minor riot, I took out the elaborate birthday candle that had arrived that morning. With some ceremony, accompanied by a short speech from Katie that the other children seemed to understand, I lit the wick. This was followed by a rousing game of "Farmer in the Dell." Somewhere about the time where the Cat takes a Rat, little Tommy wandered into the kitchen unseen, obviously bored with the childish goings on (he was four), found a rather sharp knife, tested the edge, and promptly cut his finger. His howl of pain and indignation put a speedy end to the Farmer and his friends.

No longer being the center of attraction, Katie quietly crawled behind the sofa, where I found her, fast asleep, minutes later. I carried her to her crib and she didn't even flutter an eyelash. The party managed to survive without her.

Sometime later, I peeked in to see how Katie was doing. A little girl in a pink party dress sat playing on the floor with her back towards me. Idly, I wondered which five year old she was. It was difficult for me to see in the dimness of the room.

"Darling, don't play in here," I said softly, not wanting to wake Katie. "Come out here, and I'll see if I can find you some more ice cream."

She stood up and turned. As she walked to me, I felt a strange uneasiness. Even before she spoke, I felt terribly afraid. Her sweet little face looked up at me, and each word she spoke in her clear child's voice stabbed through me. I knew immediately what had happened. There was no time to rationalize *how* I knew, or why I was so sure. I didn't even stop to look in the crib, for I knew it would be empty.

I did what I had to do without thinking. I rushed to the forgotten birthday candle and snuffed it out with my bare hand, burning my fingers and never noticing, just as the wax melted over the five-year notch. The child followed me and repeated, "Why, Mommy? Why can't I play in there?" and there was perplexity on her face as she looked up at me with Katie's pansy eyes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shapes in the sky

by CIVILIAN SAUCER INTELLIGENCE

The third of a series of bi-monthly columns of UFO sightings and reports, written specially for this magazine.

IT HAS often been stated that there exists no "physical evidence" to support the reality of unidentified aerial objects. For example, Edward Ruppelt, in *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Doubleday, 1956, p. 312), says: "There have been no reports in which the speed or altitude of a UFO has been measured, there have been no reliable photographs that show any details of a UFO, and there is no hardware. There is still no proof." Officialdom has been even more emphatic in denying the existence of any "hardware" (physical evidence). But the phenomenon commonly referred to as "angel hair" looks very much like physical evidence associated with UFOs.

"Angel hair" is an evanescent substance that has been seen to fall from the sky during, or shortly following, the passage of one or more UFOs. According to numerous concordant descriptions by witnesses, this substance appears similar to spider gossamer; but, unlike gossamer, it rapidly sublimes and disappears, especially when handled. This singular feature—the sub-

The Research Section of Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York turns to Angel Hair, *one of the most interesting of the phenomena associated with UFO sightings. CSI has a program of public lectures, publishes a newsletter, and has an extensive file of material and photographs on UFO.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stance's rapid evaporation—makes it a difficult sort of "evidence" to work with.

As readers of Charles Fort are aware, massive falls of so-called "gossamer"—apparently unassociated with spiders—have been known for centuries; but the first association with silvery sky objects in our records appeared in *Natural History* magazine for September, 1951. Mr. W. H. Hutchinson of the Cohasset district of Butte County, California, describes hundreds of small, low-flying "shiny, silvery-white balls" with long tails, which he and many others saw flying northward over Butte County, on the morning of October 11, 1950. "Before our eyes, they formed connected V's of two, three, and more...the objects seemed solid...they could disintegrate before our eyes without a sound, seemingly with a trace of light blue smoke lingering for a moment." These residues floated to earth, and one was found to be a "mass of sticky, gauzy stuff" which "in less than an hour had evaporated or wilted into tough, white threads, resembling a spider web, but of much tougher consistency."

Mr. Hutchinson sent this material to the entomologist Willis Gertsch, of the New York Museum of Natural History, who, ignoring the spherical objects reported by the witnesses, considered it to be spider gossamer.

Perhaps the most remarkable case in our records took place two years later, in southwestern France. About noon on October 17, 1952, the residents of Oloron, in the Pyrenees, were astounded by the appearance in a clear sky of a large white cylinder, inclined at a 45-degree angle, with a plume of white smoke escaping from its upper end. Preceding this cylinder was a group of about thirty globular objects, which through field-glasses appeared as red spheres with yellow "Saturn-like" rings. These darted rapidly about in pairs, linked together by "a whitish streak, like an electric arc." As the strange objects passed over, large quantities of thread-like fibres began drifting toward the ground, clinging to trees and shrubs, roofs and telephone wires. When handled, it became gelatinous, then evaporated without a trace. It was inflammable when ignited. A local school teacher wound some on a stick and put it in his brief case, but it disappeared before he had time to analyse it. The presence of the objects was confirmed by radar at Mont-de-Marsan, which tracked them on their westerly course for over ten minutes. Other visual reports came from observers at Geronce (including the mayor), and hunters in the Josbaigt Valley. In spite of all this testimony, French newspapers "explained" that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the substance was nothing but spider gossamer.

Most remarkable of all, ten days later, exactly the same aerial procession appeared a hundred miles to the east, over the town of Gaillac. Here the smaller objects flew much closer to the ground. As at Oloron, "angel hair" fell in abundance. (For further details, see Aime Michel's *The Truth About Flying Saucers,* Criterion Books, 1956.)

A year later, "angel hair" fell near Oakland, California. On October 13, 1953, Mrs. Edwin Meyer of Pleasant Hill, noticing that her turkeys were excited by something overhead, looked up and saw a round object, followed by three others which appeared to be "linked together." These objects "threw off a whitish substance" that floated to the ground. Mrs. Meyer found a 12-foot-long "silky strip" in a tree, and turned it over to the sheriff's office in Martinez for investigation by military authorities. (Oakland *Tribune,* Oct. 14, 1953.)

A month later the San Fernando Valley of California was the scene. On November 16, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Dangelo, with several neighbors, saw a "silvery ball," which moved sideways and up-and-down. "Finally, a long streamer of white stuff—almost like a vapor trail—spewed out of the back end. It detached itself from the ball and began to settle earthward. It spread out, stringy, like white wool being s h r e d d e d, and it drooped down all over the neighborhood like cobwebs." A bakery driver nearby saw the "vaporous blanket" settle down on the trees and wires, and some of it clung to the windshield of his truck. Mrs. Dangelo reported that the substance, if held between the fingers, "dissolved into nothing." It also appeared to have a static electrical c h a r g e, jumping from the bushes to cling to the observer's hair. Engineers from Lockheed, North American Aviation, and Douglas Aircraft took away samples of the substance, but the results of analysis, if any, were not made public. (San Fernando Valley *Times,* Feb. 15, 1954.)

On February 1, 1954, there was a repetition. At Puente, in the San Fernando Valley, Mrs. W. J. Daily said she observed, through eight-powered binoculars, a huge disc or ball-shaped object "studded with what seemed to be windows." After 10 or 15 seconds, it suddenly turned reddish. "Then it emitted some shiny cobweb-like substance which began to drift to earth. The stuff fell lower and lower until it hung on trees and telephone wires. Some of it fell into our yard. It was long and silvery and somewhat akin to spider webs. But it vanished when I tried to touch it with my hands." However, Mr. Daily succeeded in gathering

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some of the substance with a cloth wound around a stick, and sealed up two samples of it in clean jars. LeRoy Betz, a "civilian special investigator for the Air Force," took one jar with him, but what he did with it, and any conclusions reached as to its nature, are unknown.

This same UFO was observed by Mr. and Mrs. Mel Barnes, as well as several others. They described it as a "dead-white ball, three times the size of a full moon," flying near a plane. "Suddenly, a stream of white lacy substance flowed from the ball. Then the ball went straight up and disappeared." Mrs. Barnes estimated that the lacy substance fell over an area of three city blocks, catching on trees, fences, and telephone wires. "When I picked it up in my hands, it disappeared." Another Valley resident, Mrs. Opal Lane, said she had seen a "cigar-shaped object surrounded by a halo of light" hovering over the area. And later that day, Mr. Barnes saw three discs which suddenly broke formation and streaked away at incredible speeds.

On October 22, 1954—note the concentration on the month of October—one of the most spectacular of the "angel hair" cases took place near Marysville, Ohio. At about 3:15 p.m., some sixty pupils of the Jerome Elementary School were playing in the school yard when their calls brought the principal, Mr. Rodney Warrick, to the fire escape door. Her saw a silvery, cigar-shaped object hanging motionless in the air. "Then it took off quite rapidly, in a horizontal direction, disappearing in a short time." In the wake of the object, a trail of web-like material began to drift earthward. For 45 minutes the material continued to fall. Some of it came down in cottony balls, the rest in long strands. "It looked like asbestos and felt like asbestos." Falling in enormous quantities, it covered trees, bushes, wires and clotheslines. Driving home a short time later, Mr. Warrick and a teacher, Mrs. Dittmar, found the web-like material strung in long strands across the road, "like a misty canopy," for at least three miles. These strands could be pulled out into long, shiny threads—"so tough they could hardly be broken." Yet, within less than a minute after being touched, the material would completely disappear. If only one end of the strand was handled, it would roll up into a ball before evaporating. A unique detail is that the substance itself, this stain was fugitive: Warrick said that it disappeared after half an hour. (Marysville *Evening Journal - Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1954.)

Dr. Charles A. Maney, professor of physics at Defiance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

College, Defiance, Ohio, has long been interested in aerial phenomena, particularly "angel hair." (He is a member of CSI of New York, and one of the governors of the newly-organized National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena in Washington, D.C.) Dr. Maney wrote to Mr. Warrick and Mrs. Dittmar, and learned that the prevailing opinion was that the stuff could be explained as spider gossamer. However, both Mr. Warrick and Mrs. Dittmar were convinced that "no cobwebs could cover wires as that did, somewhere within the space of one hour or less." According to Mrs. Dittmar, the editor of the Marysville *Evening Journal-Tribune* had obtained a sample of the substance, which one of Mrs. Dittmar's pupils had sealed in a jar. The editor stated that he would send the material to the Air Force. Nothing further was heard of it.

At Urichsville, Ohio, on October 1, 1955, about 10 a.m. Mrs. Della Burroway noticed seven silvery, fast-moving, disc-shaped objects in the sky. Then shortly after lunch, her daughter, Mrs. Albert Fanty, and her 8-year-old grandson saw three or four more objects.

As described by Mrs. Burroway in a letter to Dr. Maney, two of these objects, observed before her daughter and grandson came outdoors, were bucket-shaped, with a vertical mast or projection. This second visitation lasted only a few seconds. Almost immediately after the remainder of the silvery, disc-shaped objects disappeared, the air became filled with "fine silken-like silver cobwebs which floated everywhere." The TV antenna was covered, as well as the trees, and bits of the cotton-like substance continued to fall until three p. m. (Urichsville *Evening Chronicle*, Oct. 6, 1955

On October 10, 1955, Dan Arden, of High Point, North Carolina, reported that he had seen a "swarm of insects, about the size of June bugs," moving with the wind *and trailing* long strands of web-like material. He said that the closest bug was "about 150 feet up" and he could see large strands of the wispy substance at much higher altitudes as they passed near the sun. He estimated the number of bugs at between 100 and 200, and the trailing wisps as long as 250 feet. This case is particularly interesting, as it is the only case on record in which insects are reportedly seen. The ballooning spider would hardly be seen at 150 feet, *nor would it precede its web.* However, Arden was confident that his sighting could be traced to the insect world and "not to some faraway planet." (High Point, N.C., *Enterprise*, Oct. 28, 1955.)

On October 27, between

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2:45 and 3:10 p.m., about ten "shiny steel balls," moving "in all directions," passed over. Whitsett, North Carolina. The witnesses were H. D. Lambeth, principal of the Whitsett School and an Air Force veteran, and more than 100 teachers and students. Occasionally, an object would momentarily stop, and then move on. With binoculars, Lambeth tracked one object toward the sun and as it moved in that direction, "it seemed to glow a coppery color." At the same time, "angel hair" began falling from the direction of the objects.

One fragment was desroll of cotton candy." Several acres were showered with it. In this case, no reference is made to the usual rapid sublimation of the substance. One child reportedly tasted the stuff and described it as "salty." When burned, it gave off an animal odor. Samples were examined by a Greensboro biologist, who said it was unlikely that spiders could spin webs in such quantities, and suggested that it was synthetic fibre; and by a Burlington Mills technician, who said the fibres were much too fine to be those of a textile fibre, and suggested that it was spider gossamer. (*Greensboro Daily News*, October 28 & 29, 1955.)

These are typical cases. though they by no means exhaust those on record. The well-defined character of the phenomenon is obvious, but its significance is less so. In our next article, we shall conclude this discussion of "angel hair," presenting a detailed account investigated at first hand, and attempting to draw some speculative conclusions about the weird and "unearthly" stuff.

FLYING SAUCERS CREATE FUROR

Reprints Available Free

There have been so many comments, pro and con, by readers interested in Flying Saucers, concerning Ivan Sanderson's article, "AN INTRODUCTION TO UFOLOGY", which appeared in our February issue, that we have decided to make reprints available to those who missed it.

Individuals or organizations desiring copies may secure these reprints GRATIS by requesting them on the coupon below.

KING SIZE PUBLICATIONS, Inc.
320 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.

Please send reprint of AN INTRODUCTION TO UFOLOGY to

_____

_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

book of goots

by . . . JOHN HEALY

Goots was a strange man who had forsaken his old ways more fully than the police were quite ready to believe

GOOTS held his breath while he studied his cards, slowly he exhaled with a soft whistle.

"That does it," whined the dealer. "When Goots makes with the whistle I quit." He slammed his cards onto the table. The three other men hesitated and then one after another tossed in their hands.

"You know, Goots," said Henry, a retired pick-pocket and personal friend, "if I thought you was makin' magic in this game I'd blow a hole in you so big you could shove your crystal ball through it."

Goots stopped stacking his chips and looked at his friends with a hurt expression.

"You boys know me, good old Goots don't do nothin' like that to his friends."

He pushed his chunky face into a square smile, and the friends smiled back. It looked like feeding time in the hyena cage.

Checking the thin watch on his thick wrist, Goots said, "Sorry boys but that's it. I got a seeancy comin' up in a couple'a hours and this place gott'a be aired out and things done."

"We've all been wonderin'

John Healy, author of this story of the fabulous Swami Goots, at one time worked for a medium, learning the business. He later did a mind-reading act and worked for a horoscope-cum-mindreading pitch, "never sure if I was a mentalist who acted or an actor who did mentalism . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for a long time," said Hi-lo, the pawnbroker, "how you got in this spook business. One day a kid comes round sayin' you was hangin' out a shingle. I says, if it's for what Goots does you don't hang out no shingle, not if you got brains you don't."

The tattered faces about the table nodded in agreement.

"When we hear you turned to the straight and narrow it shocked all of us what had held you figuratively to our bosoms. The best fence in town gone; Swami Goots we got instead."

"A woman done it to me," said Goots sorting his chips. "Remember that babe from the Northend what I was so nuts about? Forget her name, but you know who I mean. She married that cop who tried to give the Mayor a ticket for jay-walkin." He smiled thinking of the fate his ex had chosen for herself. "She used to go for magic tricks—big! She couldn't do none herself, just had to know how they was done. I had some business in New York so I figures I'd pick up some books from one of them big magic shops they got there."

"I gets to the door of a real swanky magic store when a little guy, bout four foot high, sticks his head round a corner and looks hard at me. He jerks his big head at me like he wants to talk. When I gets to him he don't say nothin'. Stands there squintin' his watery eyes at me like he was tryin' to see through my head. Then he takes a real good look at this gold bug ring I picked up through business."

Goots tapped the heavy gold scarab ring he wore on his left hand.

"This runt stares at the ring and then at me like he can't figure somethin' out. Finally he talks; wants to know if I wanna buy some real stuff. So I tell him, sure, but I gott'a see the pitchers first. He ain't sellin' no pictures, he got a book."

"He shows me this here book on magic and tells me about the words and drawin's in it. It's so easy, he says, even a kid or me could do it. So I ask, if it's so good, what's he sellin' for? Turns out he works for some big guy called, Marduke, what sends him and a lot's other guys out peddlin' books so magic don't die out. I figures what's a buck and buys the book."

"Couple a days later while I'm waitin' for the business to work out I finds I ain't got no magazine or nothin', so I reads the book. Junk, I tells me, but I reads it. One part tells how to make flowers and you guys know how I think about flowers. I make like the books says, an, "Boom" the whole lousy room is filled with all kinds a flowers. They was all done up fancy like I was a'ready dead. Just then the call comes in and I ain't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

got no time to clean the place up."

"This call tells me the 'Boys in Blue' is on and the best thing I can do is get. Back in the room I'm packin' when I hears a noise, it comes from the book. I look and it is open to some spell for travelin'. I figure, if flowers work, travelin' should, and it does."

"Later, I hear how the cops got there bout the time I left. When they finds all my stuff and sees the flowers they think I was put outt'a commission. The old dame what run the place spots some dough I stuck under the piller. She makes a fast grab for it and tells the bulls I was taken out just before they got there, in a pine box."

Goots belched loudly and rose, signifying the meeting had adjourned.

Abagail Amish planted her six feet, square rigged frame on a hard chair at police headquarters. Being early, as usual, she had the opportunity to do something about her short comings. A fresh application of powder did little to improve her horse-like face. She repinned the widow's weeds and shifted the bunion pad on her left foot. All was in place when Captain O'Flarity entered with a sheaf of papers and his great cow-eyes.

Abagail stood at attention before her superior.

"Please, Miss Amish," said the Captain, "I wish you wouldn't do that when we're alone, it makes me uncomfortable."

The Captain blushed and tried to hide it behind the papers he held before his heavy face. He stood shifting his weight, a swaying tower, three inches taller than Abagail.

"I want you to look into this Goots business on Maple Street," he said leaning against the desk to steady his watery muscles; his broad chest heaving.

"This ghost business is new with Goots," she said, shaking her head, "three months at the most. He isn't the type for this racket."

O'Flarity shook his head and smiled.

"From what I've been able to pick up this Goots is a changed character." She frowned slightly at the possibility of anyone changing from the form she had set them in. "Seems he considers himself a solid business man, everything on the counter and no one in the back room. I don't like it, there is something so wrong about the setup, it looks legitimate."

"Miss Amish," said the Captain, "we both know the tricks of the spook business. Grab the materialization and bring in the clientele as witnesses."

Abagail saluted. She felt the thrill of the chase on every new assignment, and she deserved it, there was no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other thrill in her life. Along with the excitement there was the routine. The routine was automatic to her, she had been on the Bunko Squad longer than any woman in her right mind would care to remember.

"I'm using your sister's name and background this time," she said. "I hope you don't mind. You know it is safer to use a real widow, saves you if they check for information."

Her voice was heavy and big. Talking to the Captain like this gave her the opportunity of studying him. He wasn't bad looking, she thought, if you went in for men with long, full faces. She wondered if he ever thought about anything besides business.

O'Flarity was delighted with the thought that 'his' Abagail was using his sister's name. Even an assumed name which was somehow connected with him made him feel closer to his redoubtable love.

Arriving half an hour before the seance Abagail set to searching out little helps to the spirits. The others in the room made snooping more difficult. Touching, pushing and gently pulling she hoped to be classified as a nosey woman setting a price on everything.

So different, she thought, from the usual back-parlor mediums. Everything, with the exception of the large round mahogany table in the middle of the room, was a grey. From a white-grey ceiling the color melted down to the subtle richness of the dark grey carpet. A quick estimate of the cost staggered Abagail.

Twenty-five minutes provided her with nothing which made her wonder if she were slipping or if this Goots was smarter than any of the others had dared to be. If nothing else the clientele was the same. There were the usual older women who search out such places in hope of escaping from the drab corner Life has trapped them. A few, not overly bright looking younger people and herself completed the company, seven in all. Watching small groups whispering Abagail wished they could find whatever they were searching for. The automatic reflex of regulations set in and she rebuked herself for being a fool.

The murmur of a hidden gong announced to the faithful that, 'Time was'. With small, quiet movements they took their places about the circular table and waited.

The Swami entered as though he had been announced by a bank of trumpeters, but not without a gentle dignity. He wore a well cut suit of dark material, but even the best of tailors could do little to hide the enormous paunch. Three diamonds

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flashed on his fingers and a new, clean turban covered the bald head of the master.

From a throne-like chair, a little withdrawn from the sitters, Goots address his, 'Flowers of the Light,' as he liked to call them:

"Them what has never been here before will note I am not the usual kind of swindler what takes your money and gives you nothin' in return. My motto is, 'From Goots you gets.'"

Something about the little fat man tickled Abagail between her heart and her spleen. She smiled inwardly, deciding if he were a Hindu Swami his mother must have been frightened by Hoboken.

"Leave us join hands and think of them what has gone on ahead of us." Goots bowed his head and the rest of the circle followed.

Abagail watched the Swami through half closed eyes while the others were thinking of "them what passed on". So far as she was able to see he did nothing but sit with his head bowed.

Suddenly Goots snapped out of his reverie; "Okay, that's enough. If you ain't thought of them by now you never will. Now down to business."

Touching a wall switch near his chair, Goots killed the lights.

"This don't make no real difference," the Swami's voice came through the darkness. "I make it dark on account of this part is so easy you could learn how by watchin' me and then I'd be outta'a business. I gott'a keep my trade secrets."

"Of all the.. Well I never! A self-confessed fraud." Abagail indignantly addressed the nothingness in front of her.

"He is not," a miffed male voice to her right informed her. "He is trying to explain that he uses magic rather than trance-work, as most mediums do."

Unconvinced, Abagail listened to the faint shufflings and mutterings of the Swami. With no forewarning bumps or raps the heavy table rose into the air dragging along all hands. It hung suspended in the blackness and then suddenly dropped, landing directly on Abagail's pet bunion. Her howl of anguish shot the table back to its floating position.

Rubbing her hurt, she silently cursed the Swami, using every four letter word she knew and a few she had picked up at the Station without ever guessing their meaning.

Cautiously the table settled to the floor.

The lights faded-up showing the room the same as before. It was a little cooler but the air-conditioner might account for that.

"Remember," said Goots happily, "when them friends what passed on comes, don't touch the trumpet or you'll

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

get knocked across the room."

And maybe, thought Abagail, if they touch it you might get your wires crossed. She squirmed in a growing sense of discomfort; her bunion hurt, the chair was hard, her hands were clammy and in general this Swami could go to hell.

At the request of the Swami one of the sitters, a young man named Joe, placed the trumpet in the center of the table. It was reminiscent of the early crooner days, which Abagail refused to remember. The trumpet stood surrounded by sitters quiet out of the reach of Goots.

"Okay, Sibyl, we're ready at this end," Goots called.

The trumpet slid over the table, rattled about and then shot into the air, floating a little above the reach of the sitters.

Abagail dug her fingers into the hands of the men on either side of her; they winced. The trumpet hung wireless in the bright light and there was nothing she could do about it.

"Hi everybody, this is Sibyl." The voice had the basic quality of a long distance operator. "Whom do we wish to speak to this evening?"

"I'd like to contact my husband," Abagail blurted out.

"The last name, please, also the date of the beginning of his last reincarnation. Date of death. How the deceased died and your full name." Receiving O'Flarity's sister's background the trumpet turned end over end stopping directly above Abagail. "Sorry, your party has changed his address and we are having trouble locating him. I'll try again in ten minutes. Next?"

Making the round of the table the trumpet greeted friends informally, getting their parties with no difficulty. Goots, Abagail noted, was as interested as the sitters themselves. There was something so naive about the short tubby man Abagail found it impossible to harden her law-enforcing-heart against him. Wistfully she wished he had chosen a profession just a little less illegal.

The last sitter had made contact and been disconnected and Abagail still waited. Goots was excited, his eyes shone and his vast bundle of fat shook coyishly.

"Folks, before I finish tonight I got somethin' new to try. I been workin' on a materialization and it could be I finally got it. I did it last night, once, so maybe again." He chuckled quietly. "Now this here lady is waitin' for her husband to come across. How about if I make him so we all can see him?"

"That's good of you," said Abagail cautiously.

"No it ain't. For ten bucks you got a good show comin'."

"Your party has been located, Madam," announced Sy-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

byl? "Are you ready at this end?"

"Tell him to wait a minute, will you, Sibyl?" We wanna try for a materialization."

The trumpet dropped to the table as Sibyl rushed off to the spiritual switchboard, her ectoplasm flushed with excitement.

Leaning forward, Goots, made swift curving motions in the air, stopping occasionally to remember the next step. His voice clabbered sounds which hurt the ear. At the command, "Appear!" there was a second of timelessness followed by a splash of cold air pouring through the room.

Watching the blue-white light forming near Goots, Abagail unhappily remembered rule number one: 'Grab the materialization.' She sighed.

The splotch of light spread quickly disclosing thick effulgent clouds, twisting and rolling back upon themselves. Reaching the height and breadth of a man it stopped; swaying gently. Hands parted the clouds as though they were curtains. A handsome, well-set man stepped into the room and stood looking about the circle.

Abagail, shocked by the condition of the man completely blocked the impossibility of the situation. "You're naked," she squalled, pointing to the athletic figure.

"Really, Madam," the figure moved toward her, "What did you expect—shrouds?"

"But you're showing," Abagail understated.

"If you would be lady-like enough to stop looking I would not be showing." Annoyed by his reception the spirit glared into Abagail's flushed face. "Woman, it has been said, was created from the rib of Adam, but you, Madam, were spawned by the jaw-bone of a jackass." Turning to Goots, he demanded, rudely, "Where the hell is my wife?"

Jarred by the callousness of the forgetful husband, Goots motioned to Abagail, "Your little woman's right there. You're talkin' to her."

"That is not my wife. She's a fraud." Glaring malevolently at the un-nerved Abagail, he shouted, "I wouldn't marry that bag if she was the last woman in Limbo."

Goots leaped to the defense of womankind; "That is a bad thing to say even if she ain't your wife. And what's more—"

"Listen buster," the spirit closed in menacingly, "you called me into this sphere, the whole trip was your idea. Do you think I'd cross-cut three dimensions just to listen to this harpy make cracks about the way I do not dress?" No one said anything, especially Abagail. "I was having myself a time with a little Egyptian doll by the name of Cleo when the call came through. If some patent package of sweetness and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

light in your little mind made you think I wanted to leave that party you're nuttier than that fraud." Tapping Goots on the chest he continued; "You make with the magic and get me out of here or I'm going to wreck this joint. And," he added in a quiet, nasty manner, "I'm going to do it with you."

One harsh Chaldean word and the young man was back with his little Egyptian girl: vintage, 69 B.C.

Abagail's senses departed with the spirit, but in an opposite direction. Her body slipped to the floor, thwacking her head roughly on the hard seat of the chair. The three women present insisted upon rubbing her two wrists simultaneously, and one of the men suggested artificial respiration. Sibyl, returned, shouting advice at the top of her trumpet:

"Call 999," she blasted at them while maneuvering her trumpet-self into the midst of the excitement.

A little pink and lavender old lady, who spent most of her afternoons viewing English motion pictures, translated Sibyl's whoops and called the police.

CAPTAIN O'FLARITY was sitting by when the call came through. He rushed out pulling the first cop he found along with him.

"Get a car," he bawled.

"I don't know how to drive, sir," said the youngster, apologetically.

"Get a car and get it now," he was ordered.

With every available man drafted for "operation Goots", O'Flarity blasted from the building into his waiting car.

The Captain and his innocent driver arrived at Goot's home in a mild state of shock and on the wrong side of the walk. Silently he led his entourage of blue to the heavy, white panelled door, and with a great display of movie-dramatics, directed three of the men to shoulder down the door.

The remainder of the policemen, feeling left out of things, wandered over the lawn and flowerbeds shouting to open in the name of the law. Furtive shades moved at neighbouring windows.

Seeing the men at the door were making no progress, O'Flarity replaced the lightest one with himself. The Captain let the final rush at the door, which opened as they reached it. The men never stopped.

The prim little lady who had phoned firmly shut the door on the remainder of the department. Three tangled men on the floor were not what she had expected of the law.

"If you will be quiet," she said, "I feel this can be handled much more efficiently."

Stiff backed, she marched

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the police into the seance room. Abagail was stretched out on the mahogany table. Goot's turban cushioned her head and her feet were raised on a pile of books. Goots was stroking her hair and making soothing sounds, while she in turn, cooed.

Every drop of blood, Irish, Scottish and Spanish rose to a fighting pitch in O'Flarity. Brushing aside Goots he gathered up 'his' Abagail and carried her out to the car, stopping long enough to order the arrest of everyone in the house.

Goots tried to follow Abagail but was stopped at the door. Struggling in the policeman's grip he shouted assurance to her that it was all his fault and she must not blame herself.

When the ambulance arrived at Maple Street all was dark. Abagail had been admitted to the hospital and Goots was trying to adjust his overly large bottom to the narrow cot in the cell.

For the tenth time in the past hour, Goots insisted he was not to blame. "Of course it isn't your fault," Joe, the youngest man of the group said. "That fool woman was a cop. People who do not understand deep psychic things should mind their own business." He patted Goots on the shoulder.

Goots rose, and with as much dignity as was possible under the circumstances said, "Miss Amish is the most wonderful woman I ever met, yet, so don't make no more cracks. See?" He resumed his seat and buried his face in his hands.

"Too bad we can't go off in a column of smoke like that spirit did," Joe said to himself in a voice loud enough to be a suggestion.

Goots brightened considerably. "What about that travelin' spell I got?" he said. "Now all I gott'a do is remember the fool thing." Brushing aside all questions and demands he began thinking magic.

"Here's how things stand," Goots explained. "Once you use a spell the words and arm swingin' stays in your head and you can't forget 'em."

Joe thought that interesting and said so.

"Now," continued Goots, ignoring Joe, "Vanishin' an producin' an travelin' is all about the same spell. They is all doin' the same thing in a different way. The main part of the spell I know, you don't forget that, but there's a lot of little things you gott'a do too." Nervously he rubbed his bald head. "It's them little things I'm kind'a mixed-up on."

In answer to a question concerning the 'little things,' he replied, "You need squares and triangles and all different things for each spell. Also there is things you do with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

your fingers, and this finger wigglin' is real important."

"And if your finger movements are wrong?" asked Joe.

"Then we ends up from the North Pole to the South Pole, all over, spread out real thin." Sweat dribbled off his chin in large loose drops. "I don't like to try nothin' without no test run, only we ain't got nobody to run a test on."

The three men, who had more confidence in Goots than Goots had, volunteered. Goots new code of honest weight for all forced him to refuse and go himself. This announcement brought ringing shouts from the men. "Bravo... Stout-fellow," did little to relieve Goots trepidation.

Alone in the center of the cell Goots reviewed what he hoped was the complete spell. Six eyes, moist with expectation stared at the frightened little man as he began gibbering the spell. His heavy arms wove thick patterns in the air while the short broad fingers fumbled intricate designs. Exploding to a foot-stamping finish he waited. Six lips pressed hard and waited.

Then they came; rabbits. Rabbits of all shapes and heights; there were tall rabbits, short rabbits, fat rabbits, thin rabbits, old, young, and middle-aged rabbits. Two hundred of them poured out of the circle of nothing which hung a few inches from the floor.

Watching the rabbits flooding through the bars into the corridor the men noted a general sameness about them—other than being rabbits. From Belgian to Cottontail every bunny was a bright, lipstick red.

"I guess I done somethin' wrong," said Goots. The men agreed.

"Circles," whispered Goots, after the half-mad guard had left them. "Ya need circles to off-set the things or somethin'."

At the sacrifice of three ball point pens and a drop of blood from each man all was ready.

"Now remember, boys, first I go home and get the consecrated chalk for more circles, I get the ladies and then youse." He stepped into the circle and began. "Here I am where I ought to be but I don't see what I wann'a see. Ishtar, Meigral, Marduk, Bel; come to my aid and do not fail. Insfor, triffin nockin vous, if I ain't here then neither are youse." And he wasn't.

AT HOME, Goots searched for his book but found the police had removed everything connected with his business. There was the sound of movement downstairs which he rightly surmised to be a man left to guard the house. Filling his pockets with the chalk, he drew a circle and charmed himself to the ladies portion of the jail.

His first stop was the little

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

old lady's cell. She received him graciously, not disturbed by his sudden appearance. In her youth she had belonged to the Oxford Movement and nothing appeared out of the ordinary to her. Each woman, she told Goots, had been assigned to a single cell, and he was glad he had brought plenty of chalk with him.

It was only the last woman, a Mrs. Smithers—who shall remain nameless—who gave him any trouble. Her nerves had never been strong and when she felt the spell taking hold, screamed, "Careful, this is my first time."

On his fourth trip, Goots found the time to worry over the safety of his book. "There's no tellin'," he muttered to himself, "what a unhonest man or a cop can do with a book like that, besides, I need it to get our names off the charge sheet."

A guard stopped by the cell where Goots and his male followers were standing in a circle, holding hands. Sensing an important movement was taking place the guard shouted to the man at the desk to open the cell door. The chant had begun; when the door was finally opened there was nothing left but three ruined ball point pens and a tuff of red rabbit fur.

The men safely home, Goots wandered through the city, thinking about Abagail and what might have been. Habit directed him and he found himself home without fully being aware of it. His dreams snapped off as he turned the corner of the tall hedge fencing his property. There, in the doorway stood a policeman.

Question: Where would the police not look for him? The answer: In his own bed.

A loud voice shattered an impossible dream involving Abagail, "All of them escaped last night," it said.

Goots recognized the voice as belonging to the man who had carried away Abagail. He pulled on his clothes, keeping one ear attuned to the colloquy downstairs.

A man's voice murmured, only to be shouted down, "I don't care! If the papers get ahold of this there is going to be trouble. Only this morning the Mayor told me he wanted this town to have a clean record when he isn't re-elected this fall. And if he doesn't," the voice topped itself," he's going to take every-last man of us with him."

Forgetting his book for the nonce, Goots hopped into the circle he had drawn last night and sent himself to the 'Flower of his thoughts'.

He arrived in the hospital with a slight bump. Bright sunlight spilled across Abagail's face reminding him of a calendar he had fondly owned. Holding his breath he feasted his eyes upon the beauty only a man in love could see.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Abagail stirred and then slowly opened her eyes. "What the—?" She jerked upright and started to get out of bed. Remembering her scanty hospital costume she pulled her legs back under the covers. "What are you doing here?" It was more, "How nice to see you again," than a question.

Goots, glowing warm and rosy said, "I didn't mean nothin'. I jest wanted to look at ya."

The door to the room started to open; quickly, for one of his size, Goots slipped behind a screen standing in the corner.

A stocky nurse entered with a basin and a determined smile. Stamping over to Abagail, this terribly healthy creature heartied, "You wash your face and hands like a good girl and we'll have our yummy breakfast in jig-time." Handing the basin to the patient she slammed out, sure in the knowledge she had sprinkled a handful of sunbeams over another poor soul.

Abagail was in the act of throwing the basin after the nurse when Goots stepped from behind the screen. "Thank you for not tellin' her I was there," he pointed to the screen. Facing his love, he patted his hands together softly and assumed an expression of a puppy searching for a new master.

Abagail went soft, something she had not done since her rookie-days. "Why did you endanger yourself coming to see me?" she asked, hoping for the right answer.

Goots goggled at her and would have twisted his hat if he had had one. "Miss Amish, what I gott'a tell ya I ain't told nobody for a long time, yet."

Abagail thought this over. It held a vague thought, but one difficult to spot. Goots continued, his voice filling her mind with the few nice memories she owned.

"I got it bad for you and if you wanted to, legal-like, we could. Now."

While the words were not those she dreamed, the basic end to a long felt desire was there. She was going to say, "yes", she knew, but the impossible seance bothered her enough to demand an explanation first.

"I jest magiked," explained Goots. "Look, I'll show ya." He made magic and the room was filled with flowers, each bunch of Forget-me-nots bearing a small card; "Goots to Abby. Love."

This lovely scene was shattered by the loud voice which had awakened Goots. It was yelling down nurses and approaching at a dangerous rate. Blowing a kiss to Abagail, Goots skipped back behind the screen.

Captain O'Flarity burst into the room and then backed down at the sight of the patient.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Through habit, Abagail started to rise when he entered but remembering her state of dishabille remained where she was and saluted instead.

"How do you feel this morning?" O'Flarity asked, slyly adding, "dear."

"How should I feel? There was nothing wrong with me last night."

"If there wasn't anything the matter, why did you faint?"

"There was a nude man and we had an argument. I was a little upset."

"Oh my Gawd! An orgy yet. If I had known anything like that was going to happen I never would have given you the assignment. You know that, don't you?"

"There was nothing improper going on at all," she said, setting her mouth in a firm line, ready to defend her adventure to the last asterisk.

"When a man runs around with his pants off it isn't to feel a cool breeze on his knees."

"I have no way of knowing what you do when you are without your trousers, but last night had nothing to do with anything you are implying. The nude man wasn't exactly a stranger to you, he was your brother-in-law, Milton."

"Milton has been dead for eight years," O'Flarity barked. "Are you sure you didn't knock your head?"

"It's very simple," she said, "Swami Goots isn't a fake and your brother-in-law doesn't wear clothes where he is now. No one does, or so I gathered."

"Dead or alive that Milton is no good. I know. I lived with them when they were first married, and he'd walk in on me when I was showering. Stand there, shaving and talking to me like there was nothing wrong." The memory of his libertine brother-in law brought an expression of virgin modesty to O'Flarity's face. "What am I talking about, Milton's dead, and if you will forgive me saying so, I think you got shook last night."

Abagail glared but said nothing.

Fumbling for an out, O'Flarity pulled Goot's book. From his pocket and handed it to Abagail. "If nothing else sticks we can get that Swami for witchcraft."

"Really, Captain O'Flarity, you can't charge a man with witchcraft!"

"Oh no?" I checked the books and the law still stands. It's as legal today as it was two hundred years ago. I don't think the jury will let us burn him at the stake, but we can try."

Smiling at the prospect, O'Flarity walked to the win-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dow and stood looking down at the street.

Goots peeked around the screen and mouthed, "Throw the book."

Abagail looked at Goots; wondering. He winked at her and lovely electrical emotions gushed through her, titilating her to core. Thus intoxicated she picked up the book to throw it.

O'Flarity turned around and his first impression was that his beloved was about to bash him.

Grasping the first straw that floated by, she chuckled him under the chin with the book and horse-voiced, "Darling."

The effect was more magical than the book. O'Flarity turned a deep red which faded to a off-greenish white. Throwing his hands over his head he faced the wall and pounded on it with his fists, kicking the baseboard at the same time. His last emotional stopper pulled out he began making hooting sounds which strongly resembled the mating-call of a rather effeminate moose.

Shocked at what she had turned loose on the world, Abagail dropped the book and held her ears. It is not every woman who hears the mating-call of the O'Flaritys, but Abagail did not appreciate the honor. She hid under the covers as any sensible woman would.

Goots, noting all attention was far from his book, tiptoed to the bed, grabbed it and ran back to his shelter.

As the erotic mooings of O'Flarity was dying away Abagail felt a tingling sensation. Opening one eye she discovered she had been magically dressed. As she was about to stick her head out into the hostile world, two strong arms gathered her up.

O'Flarity, having finished his overture to love, turned to catch the two lovers escaping. "Drop that", he commanded.

Goots dropped the bundle, which was Abagail, and scooted to the far end of the room.

O'Flarity drew his gun and stalked the rabbit in the barrel.

Diving for the bed, Goots called, "Spread the sheet, Abby." Crouching under the bed he thumbed through his book.

"Abby! He called me, Abby," she twittered, spreading the sheet. Bending to straighted a corner she blocked O'Flarity in one of his more strategic moves and sent him sprawling, his gun shot across the room.

Setting his back against the springs, Goots rolled the bed toward the sheet. As he rolled he muttered a spell, stopping to make appropriate gestures. Reaching the center of the sheet he looked out and saw Abagail kick the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Captain where even a thin man is thick.

Climbing on the bed, Goots reached out and pulled Abagail in with him. "Out" he directed the improvised flying carpet.

Slowly the sheet, with the bed and the lovers floated into the air. Goots glanced back at O'Flarity sitting on the floor gasping, his hands holding the top of his head. Turning, Goots opened the door and then snuggled back with Abagail, patting her where she hadn't been patted since she was a girl.

When the door closed O'Flarity was able to gather up himself, gun and courage and dash down the hall.

To a young nurse at the desk he shouted, "Did a man and woman fly by here on a sheet?"

The nurse smiled, "No, they turned left one aisle over and headed for the window. Now be a good boy and go back—"

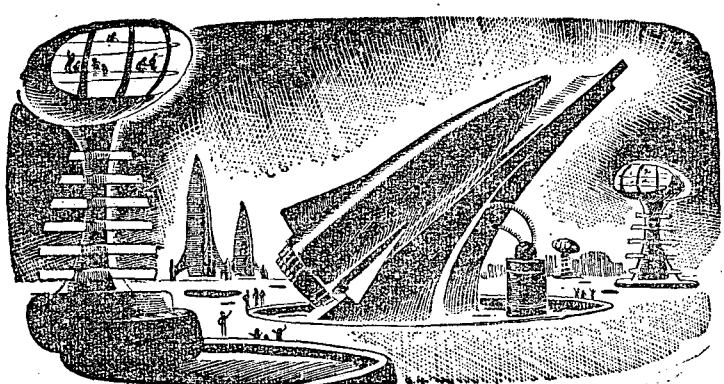
O'Flarity had gone, and was sprinting down the hall waving his gun and shouting loudly.

Picking up the phone, the nurse pressed a button attached to the base, waited, and then said:

"Another one from the Woolie-ward, on the third floor. I wish you people would keep them where they belong. This one thinks he's a policeman chasing a speeding sheet; obviously some form of maladjustment."

The love-birds were cruising at about fifteen thousand feet, when Goots said, "I know where we can get hitched. Yea?"

Abagail smiled up at her knight in shining sheeting and assented.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

backward turn backward

by DOROTHY H. EDGERLY

They'd told him he mustn't practise magic on the mountain or interfere with human progress — and he wouldn't.

WHEN I heard that a Coven had been called, I was stopped dead in my tracks. Then I took a deep breath and thought:

"Take it easy, Jeb, you haven't done anything the Folk wouldn't like...or have you?" I thought and thought but couldn't come up with a single thing. I hadn't stepped out of line, that is, not lately. Then I breathed a sigh of relief; it was the full of the moon, that was why a Coven had been called. There was no trouble. I must admit I took off for Scarface with an easier mind that I usually have. I'm almost always in trouble, and I almost always have to defend myself against the Folk, but not this time.

I got to the mountain very early and helped build the fire. I was one of the first to dance, too, and by the time the moon was overhead and the Folks had all assembled, the young ones were following me at a great rate. Melisande was there, as fey as ever, and every time she danced with someone else, I managed to dance with a pretty little dark haired, dark-eyed witch

Dorothy H. Edgerly returns with another story of Jeb Enders, first met in FARMER IN THE DELL in our February issue, whose memories of the valley went back a couple of centuries to when he and his warlock family had come over to the New World with the first human settlers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from Mississippi. I was having me a wonderful time when the Elders called us to sit in the Circle.

"Is there any business before this Coven?" asked the black eyed wizard from Covington.

Old Man Walters hobbled up. I don't know how old he is but he must be getting on.

"I have." he quavered.

"What is it?"

"I got something to tell you. Something bad!" the old man crouched over the fire. "I got to tell you that the Humans are going to build a factory in the valley."

"Well," said the Wizard slowly, "what has that to do with us? We have nothing to do with the Humans in the valley."

"You listen to me," Old Man Walters shouted. "You listen to me. It does mean something to us. They're going to build a big factory in the valley, and that means more people will come in and more people will come up the mountain. How would you like it, if Humans came up this far and saw us at a Coven?"

"They can't get up here."

"They'll get up here. They get everywhere. We've got to stop them *now*.

"We can't stop them. The Folk have no right to stop human progress. Besides, a factory won't mean that the humans will climb this mountain. No, we must not do anything about this."

"They will too, climb the mountain!" shouted Old Man Walters." And the factory is going to bring more people to the Valley, and that means that they will have to have more places to live and... and...."

The Elders interrupted him. "We can't help that, we can't stop humans."

Old Man Walters looked around in despair. The Folk were sitting around the fire, smiling and friendly, but he knew they wouldn't help him out. He looked at me and pointed his finger at me.

"You, Jeb," he shouted, "Jeb Enders, you're supposed to be so smart...you do something."

"Oh, no sir! Not me! I'm not going to do anything against the Law!" I tried not to look as smug as I felt.

"Since when did that ever stop you?" Melisande was laughing at me, but for once I was on the right side of the Law and I just shook my head.

Old man Walters put up a good fight, but the Elders said 'NO', and the rest of the Folk backed them up.

"You won't listen to me!" he shouted, "but you'll see! You'll be sorry, I'm telling you!" and he took off still grumbling.

The moon was riding high, now, and the young ones started to dance again. Even

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Elders joined in, and the fun got fast and furious. I felt fine. I was not in trouble, I wasn't going to break the Law, and I could leap higher and dance longer than any of them! When the Coven finally broke up after the Dance of Friendship, I went home feeling fine.

The next day I went down into the valley with Melisande. I wanted to borrow the Jeep, so we stopped off at Aunt Sade's. I like Honey's Aunt for herself, but I like her too, because she is the best cook in the State. We found quite a little gathering there. Honey was there, and my brother, Walt, she sitting quietly on the sofa, he prowling around the room restlessly, as he always does when he is in a house. Aunt Sade sat in her big chair, her hands on her knees. This was unusual, she is so active. I looked around hopefully, but couldn't see any food being prepared Aunt Sade sighed.

"Well, I thought I'd live and die in Clear Springs Junction, but I'll tell you right here and now, I'll not stay here if they build that factory on the plain. All those low people coming here, building theatres and saloons, drinking and roistering around our nice village. I couldn't take it. And the smell! Glue!" She raised her hands and brought them sharply down on her knees.

"We don't know that it is going to be a glue factory, Aunt Sade." Honey leaned towards her and put her hand on Aunt Sade's clenched fist. "It may be a very nice, quiet factory that makes something that smells nice, candy, maybe."

"What's the difference?" Aunt Sade sounded tired and discouraged. "A factory is a factory, and all kinds of undesirable people will come. I don't want them in my valley."

"You don't want it, we don't want it, nobody wants it, but it is coming just the same." The sheriff had come in quietly and now sat down heavily. He nodded to all of us. "Howdy Sade, Honey, Walt." He looked at Melisande and me "Hi, young uns, you two get down here quite a lot, don't you."

"Well," I started, when he turned away and went on talking to Aunt Sade.

"Yep, they're thinking of building a big factory here. Some kind of new process to make cloth, that uses a lot of chemicals. Seems there's two top fellers sent out to pick a site for the factory. One of them wants this valley, he says its a natural for what they want. 'Tuther wants a place over beyond Clearwater. That's nearer the railroad, but there's a lot of wild land there has to be cleared. They'd have to build a railroad spur to this valley, but its almost

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all cleared land. All is, it gets kinda marshy in the Spring, they'd have to drain it." He mopped his face and went on.

"Some of us thought we might be able to do something about it. We thought maybe some of the men here might tuck up to New York to the main offices there, and try to get them to go over to Clearwater. Judge Calder is willing to go, and Mr. Woodall, the lawyer. Mebbe I'll go too."

"Think you'll do any good?" asked Aunt Sadie anxiously, "You could tell them that Tiny Stream overflows every spring and how boggy that land gets, and..."

"Wal, we could try. They've..."

He stopped as the door opened and Miz' Muzzy came in. She looked more woebegone than ever. She is a small, thin washed out kind of woman, and now, with her hair loosely hanging over her eyes, her sweater buttoned up wrong, and her skirt hiked up on one side she looked terrible. Her face was dirt streaked and her eyes red and swollen with crying. She came in and stood still in the middle of the room, wringing her hands. She started to speak even before she got inside the door.

"They're going to take my house away!" the tears streaked down her cheeks but she made no effort to wipe them away. "They're going to take my home and send Father to an Old Man's home and Silly Jake to the Asylum and Mrs. Bruce and the two children to the Poor House over to Covington! Father will die if I'm not with him to take care of him, and Silly Jake will really go off his head...and, and..."

"Now Miz' Muzzy! You set down this minute. Set here. Jeb, you go see if there's any coffee on the stove. Now Miz' Muzzy, you set still. There now, use this apron. Mellie, you go get a wet cloth and wipe her face. Honey, hold her hand, Walt SET DOWN."

Aunt Sade bustled around and had the poor soul settled in a chair. I got a cup of coffee, hot and black and Mellie wiped her face gently. But in spite of all his, the tears still ran down her face.

"It isn't as if I didn't take care of everybody," she went on without paying any attention to us. "I do, I do! I've housed them and fed them and loved them up. And now they're going to take my house away and my little old garden and send my family away!" She threw the cloth Mellie gave her over her face and sobbed aloud.

"Now, Miz' Muzzy, now just take it easy! We don't *know* they're going to take this valley. They're just considering it. Judge Calder and Mr. Woodall are going up to N'York to try to get them to take the land over beyond

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Clearwater." The Sheriff patted her shoulder awkwardly and looked at Aunt Sade helplessly.

"Miz' Muzzy, you jest drink this nice hot coffee. It will make you feel better. And you, Jeb, you tuck over to her house and tell everybody to come on over here. You're all going to stay for dinner."

"F...Father can't come. He can't walk." Miz' Muzzy was responding a little to Aunt Sade's brisk comfort.

"Jeb can push his chair or something, easy as all git out. Go ahead, Jeb, then come back and get some preserves from down cellar."

She didn't have to tell me twice. I pulled Mellie out the door and we ran over to Miz' Muzzy's old house. It stood on a little rise of land, overlooking Tiny River and the low lands beyond. It was old and small but still in good sound condition. Miz' Muzzy was always collecting strays, stray dogs, cats, a goat, Silly Jake—a halfwit no one else wanted, her own bed ridden father and recently a widow, a Mrs. Bruce and her three children, whose house had burned down one night. They had no place to go, so Miz' Muzzy took them in. Honey brought them an occasional wild turkey, or a rabbit or a hare that Walt had shot in the mountains and some of the neighbors would send her a batch of cornbread or a pie or something like that. Aside from these, Miz' Muzzy lived on the vegetables she and Silly Jake grew in her little garden. While other people *talked* about helping others, Miz' Muzzy *did* it. Now she was in danger of losing her little place. I hoped that Judge Calder and Mrs. Woodall and the Sheriff could persuade the company to take the alternate site for their factory.

Mellie took Mrs. Bruce and the children ahead, then Silly Jake and I took hold of the homemade wheelchair the old man spent most of his waking hours in and started for Aunt Sade's. He was an old man and didn't weigh very much. Silly Jake was delighted by the excitement.

Aunt Sade's dinner was all I could ask for. She sure can cook. While the humans did their best to spoil their own appetites with talk about the new factory, I just plain enjoyed myself.

When the meal was over and all the talk finished, Miz' Muzzy was quieter and more resigned. We carried her old father back and put him on the little porch. Then Mellie and I took off in the Jeep and drove to Wallacetown.

"I wish we could do something about this, Jeb." she said. "Can't you think of something?"

"No I can't. And I have no intention of doing anything. You're always telling me not to interfere with Human af-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fairs, so now I'm keeping out of trouble."

"Oh You!" she flashed a scornful look at me from her green eyes and tossed her red head. "You sound so smug! If you wanted to do something, you would!"

"Hey, now you listen. The Folk won't let me put any spells on the valley, you know that, and what else can I do?"

"You could do something. You just don't want to." She stamped her foot and turned her shoulder towards me. "You're supposed to be so smart, Jeb Enders. I think you're just as dumb as Silly Jake." and she was out of the jeep and down the road before I knew what she was doing. It took a little time for me to catch up with her, even with the jeep. I felt harassed. People were always saying that I cut corners when it came to humans...that I always took their part and interfered in their affairs. Why I had even been forbidden to do anything in the way of spells and incantations on our mountain. I didn't see how I could do anything now without using my powers of wizardry. I felt real put upon.

After I had left the jeep at Aunt Sade's in the village, I started up the mountain. I hate to quarrel with Mellie. She always makes me feel that it is my fault, and goodness knows, his time I was strictly in the right.

When I got to Honey's house I stopped off to see her. Neither she nor Walt was there, but there on the table was a wild turkey with a label on it for the hotel over at Wallacetown. I thought about poor Miz' Muzzy and decided she needed it more than the Hotel folk, so I took it up and started down the mountain again. Just where he road turned past the big boulder, overlooking the valley, I came on two men. I was too near them to fade, so I kept on going.

"Howdy." I said and went on past.

"Wait a minute, young man, I want to talk to you." The man's voice was loud and had a note of authority in it. That wasn't what made me stop. I wanted to know who they were and how come they were so near Honey's place. I turned back and sat down beside them.

"What would you like?" I asked.

"Well!...an educated Mountaineer!" It was the other man who spoke.

"You look like an intelligent person." said the first one soothingly, "tell me, what are the people of this valley like?"

"They're Humans." I said shortly.

"Of course," he parted his lips in a mirthless smile, "I mean, what are they *like?* Are they up to date, or are they backward, unintelligent?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I felt the hair on the back of my neck rise. I didn't like anything about these two, but I particularly disliked this one, the younger of the two.

"Why don't you talk to them yourself?" I got up suddenly. The wild turkey swung against my leg.

"We did—but—say, isn't that a wild turkey?"

"Yes."

"Did you shoot it in these mountains?"

"No, my brother did. Goodby, I've got to go."

"Now that is another reason for choosing this valley." The younger one had already forgotten me and was tapping the other man on the chest. He sounded excited. "If there is wild game in these mountains, we could build a hunting Lodge up higher and the men could hunt during their time off. The best elements would love that."

"They will, if they like to hunt."

"They could use the Lodge as a club, dances, cards, swimming pool. I think there is even a house we could use already there, up higher. Its a big white house, with white columns and a beautiful garden. If we offer enough I'm sure we could close the deal in no time. I'll get right on the job. Come on, this ought to knock the idea of building in Clearwater out completely."

I stood still in the middle of the path. This was worse than just a lot of new people coming into the valley. This hit at the Folk themselves! And they were now thinking that they could get Honey's house and turn it into a Country Club! There were Warlocks living on each side of the mountain. If they took Honey's house, and made it into a playground, the Folk would have to leave. Of course, my family were safe. We were so very far up the mountain, that no human would want to get up there, but Walt and Honey would be affected. I hurried down into the valley, gave Miz Muzzy the turkey then flew up the mountain.

I knew that my family would be upset when I told them the news, but when Maw let out a shriek and took off around the room on her broom, and poor Grandmaw rocked straight up into the air, I was almost sorry I had told them. It just meant that I'd be conked on the head by the rocker and slapped in the face by the broom every time I came home. Paw and Grandpaw went out under the old oak, so I ducked out too. Paw looked at me.

"Jeb, got any ideas?"

"Aw, Paw!" I tried to get past them. "You know you're always telling me not to interfere in human affairs. I'm just keeping out of trouble. I can't do anything." And I took off as fast as I could go.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paw called another Coven that night, but no one had any ideas and so we got nowhere. Finally they just decided that if the humans did build and if they came up the mountain, the Folk would just have to move. The Folk didn't like that, especially Old Man Walters. He was affected more than anyone else, since he lived down in the valley in the hollow.

He made one more try to get me to do something.

"You, Jeb Enders," he quavered, "you're supposed to be so smart. Can't you think of anything?"

"No, I can't. You are always saying that I'm too smart for my own good. You're always telling me that I'll get my come uppance any minute. I'm out of this."

The Folk tried to coax me a little, but the Elders backed me up. That was all right with me, I didn't have the slightest idea of what anyone could do anyway.

When the Coven broke up at dawn I went to the the valley. Rainbow Falls was just a trickle and, down in the valley, Tiny River at the foot of Miz' Muzzy's rise of land was just a thread of water. The sun was coming up and the mist rising from the low land was a soft, pearly grey. The white houses of Clear Water Junction gleamed in the morning light. It looked like a story book town. I sighed at the thought that it would have to change, to make place for human progress in the form of bigger and more smelly factories. I brooded. I hated the whole idea. When the sun had come up and there were signs of the valley beginning to wake up, a car rocketed along the road, drew up at he foot of the mountain and the young man I had met before got out with two other men. He stood with his back to the valley, gazing up at the mountain. Then he started to wave his arms around in wide circles. I could tell he was explaining all about his idea for a hunting lodge. I got madder and madder. Boy, If I could only *do* something to put a spoke in his wheel! The men looked up at the trickle of Rainbow Falls.

"You're going to be quite annoyed at the bog this little falls is going to make of the plain this spring." I grinned in anticipation. Spring rains always swelled the waterfall and when it did, Tiny River overflowed and the surrounding land got wet and soggy.

The men started up the mountain, the young one still talking. They stopped at a clearing and he pointed up towards Honey's house.

"Oh, no you don't!" I shouted. "You let my brother's wife alone."

I was really upset now. Walt was rather wild and I knew that if anything threat-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ened Honey or her happiness, he'd break any law he wanted to, human or Folk, just to keep her happy.

They started up again. They were so clean, dressed in clean khaki pants, shiny surveyor's boots, clean shirts open at their throats. I looked at them and wished I could give them *their* come uppance.

Thunder sounded behind me. There was a storm gathering high up in the mountains. It might and it might not get to us. I stood up and laughed out loud at the men. We Folk can always use manifestations of nature, such as weather, storms, thunder, lightning. I waited till the men had climbed halfway to Honey's house, then I called that storm up and rode it. Thunder and lightning and rain and wind! I called them all up.

It was a beauty of a storm, bigger than any the people of the valley had ever seen.

I caught that young smart aleck halfway up the mountain. I laughed so hard when I saw him slipping and sliding down, trying to get to the highway, that I was afraid they would hear me. Wow! I had me a good time! I rode high and wild as I watched the men struggle through the mud. Even when they got down to the bottom of the path they had to wade through inches of mire to get to the car.

Rainbow Falls was roaring over the lip of the cliff and Tiny River was swollen so high, it had turned the land on both sides of it into a bog. I kept riding the wind and laughing as they foundered along, their once clean clothes wet and muddy. Finally they got to their car and went off along the highway. Then I let the storm die and lay along the lip of the cliff. I thought hard about that young snip. Maybe, if I called up a storm every time they started to dig or build... No, I knew that was no good. Humans aren't dumb, they'd find a way to divert Tiny River and drain the land beside it. I had to think of something else. I caught myself up short. Why *should* I think of something else? What business was it of mine?

I tried to think that way, but I knew it was no use. I didn't want the valley to be changed, I didn't want Clear Water Junction to change from a beautiful little town to a big, bustling metropolis, I didn't want Miz' Mussy to have to lose her house, I didn't want the mountains to be converted into a human playground, but most of all, I didn't want that overbearing, smug young man to win! It was lucky that Melisande was visiting over beyond the mountain. I had nothing to distract me. I thought and thought.

The land below Miz' Muz-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

zy's house was covered with a thin layer of water from my storm. Suddenly I stood up and looked around me.

Suddenly it struck me that this waterfall must have been bigger once. Now that I looked at the formation of the land...I wondered if I was right... The little trickle of the falls fell over the edge of the cliff and fed Tiny River. A little idea was starting. I tried to get it to the forefront of my mind. I knew what the valley looked like now, in the present, and I could guess what it would look like in the future, after the factory had been built... but what *had* it looked like in the past?

I'd have to go back into the past and see. I couldn't change anything in the past, of course, but maybe I *could* get some ideas.

I sighed. I have gone back into the past a couple of times. I had to when I was studying to become a Wizard of the Fourth Class. But I don't like it. Going back is all right, but coming forward to the present is painful and tiring. Each tiny point of time pelts against you and by the time you are back in the present, you are worn out. I tried to think of another way, but I knew this was the answer.

My own memories of the valley went back a couple of centuries, to the time we came over to this New World with the first settlers. I thought hard: was the waterfall larger then? I couldn't really say. That meant that I would have to go back farther than that.

I took a deep breath and started back.

The air grew grey about me, wavering in tiny constant vertical folds. The sun was shut out by the flying specks of time. I felt as if I were standing still in space, yet at the same time I was being extended. It was if I were being sliced into infinitesimal slices of *me*, just as the air seemed to be sliced. I had no way of telling where I was or *when*. I just went on and on. At last, when I felt that I had been pulled out into a shadow of myself, I stopped.

The grey faded, the sun came out and when the slight giddy feeling had passed, I found myself standing on a ledge of rock high in the air. Below me stretched a lake, steel grey, silent, only soft ripples breaking that glass like surface. Great trees edged the shore. Beside me, a mighty waterfall leaped high in the air before falling into the lake below. I held my breath. It was beautiful and awe inspiring.

I stayed there, in that time, for a while, then I went back to *now*. I really didn't mind the pelting, I had so much to think about. When I had gone back as far as I could judge, using the rhythm of the parallel lines, I stopped. I had returned to *now*.

I lay on the same ledge that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I had been on before I started, and gazed down at the valley.

This time I looked at it with new eyes. I realized that it had been this valley I had seen in the past. Gone was the lake, gone was the mighty waterfall, but it was my valley. The low land below Miz' Muzzy's cabin looked as if it should have water on it. I could see that the little rise of land where she lived had been covered by a forest that stretched down to the lake. Clear Water Junction stood back from the lake, where the trees had not been so dense. I lay there and brooded.

"Why had the fall dried up? Why had the lake disappeared?"

They were so big. I thrilled at a thought. That lake I had seen was too big for that young man to drain, the waterfall too tremendous to divert. Maybe, if I could start the waterfall again and flood the valley...

"No, you can't, Jeb Enders. You mind your own business. Maybe with all that water there they would have to choose the alternate site for the factory, the one on the other side of the mountain. But its none of your business. Let it alone." And I went home hoping that Maw would get down off her broom long enough to cook me something to eat.

From then on the idea of the lake and the waterfall obsessed me. I thought about it all the time. *Why* had they changed. Even dancing with Mellie didn't take my mind off the problem. At last I went back to the ledge. I looked around, orientated myself, and started back. The rhythm of the journey was important, because that was the only way I had of knowing when I had returned to my own time. I didn't have to go so far back as I had gone originally, but I still had to tick off centuries. I developed a scheme, I'd go back, memorize the rhythm of time, and start forward again.

At first I kept overshooting the past, then I took it more slowly. At last, one day, when the greyness had cleared and the sun shone again, I saw that the stream that fed the waterfall was smaller. I went back towards "now". More s l o w l y. It was punishing work. I felt as if I were being pounded by a million tiny hammers. I lost weight and finally I got so thin and haggard looking that everybody was worried. Melisande came up on the ledge one day and begged me to stop.

"Jeb, you look awful! If you lose any more weight you'll blow away. I don't know what you are doing, but please, please, stop it."

"I can't stop now, Mellie. I have to find out something, and if I don't I'll never be satisfied in my mind again."

"If it's anything to do with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Humans, anything to do with the valley. . ."

"No, it isn't, Mellie, honest. It's something about nature. I just have to know the answer to something. I *have* to know."

"What do you have to know, Jeb? What is so important?"

"I can't tell you Mellie, you'd only try to stop me."

"I knew it, I knew it". There were tears in her beautiful eyes, but she brushed them away impatiently. "I knew you were up to something that would get you into trouble."

"No, it won't, Mellie, but perhaps you are right. Maybe I ought to stop for a while. Let's go over to Wallacetown for a coke."

She brightened up at that and we took off. I didn't want to go to Wallacetown particularly, but I wanted to get her away from the ledge. I didn't want to let her see me travel in time.

After I had taken her home I returned to the ledge. I felt that there was something wrong, that is, *I* was doing something wrong. I was missing an important item, somewhere. I stood beside the falls and looked around me.

"At one time or another, these streams were big enough to feed a bigger waterfall. Now they aren't, why?" I looked around again and then I had another idea.

"Wait a minute, these streams were no bigger then. They were just about the same size. There must have been some other source of water."

I walked back, away from the ledge, looking carefully for some signs of an ancient stream. No, there was not a sign of another stream. I called up a storm. No, just the same little streams, the same run off followed the rain. I was getting discouraged. I was so tired, so worn out and so hungry. I wanted to go down into the village, and have one of Aunt Sade's good meals, but I couldn't go down. I looked so terrible they'd be shocked and I couldn't give them an explanation of *why* I looked so worn and thin.

Then one day I sat down a ways back from the ledge, to rest. There must be a wide stubborn streak in me, because I just would not give up. I didn't feel like going to the ledge, it seemed too far, so this time I stood quite a ways back from the falls and further up the slope of the mountain when I started back in time.

I must have been more exhausted than I thought, because I had to stop long before I really wanted to. This time, when the grey faded I found myself standing almost on top of a large boulder. The falls were some distance away, but they were roaring and tumbling over the lip of the cliff. I was conscious of a noise behind me. I turned slowly, and there, at the foot

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the huge boulder was a tremendous spring, bubbling up and spilling over into a wide stream that ran down to the fall and plunged over the cliff. This was it! Here was the source of the fall! But why had it stopped? What had stopped the spring and caused the large stream to dry up?

I had to find out, so in spite of my exhaustion, I started back towards the present, stopping at frequent intervals, my eyes glued to the spring. It was grueling work, but I persisted.

At last I found it! This time, when the grey had faded, I found that I was looking at the spring, but now the huge boulder had fallen forward, and had landed on the spring itself. Some water was seeping through, but this was it! This was why the spring had dried up, why the big stream had vanished and why the fall, dependent only on the little streams and the run off from the rain had dwindled to a little trickle. I had finally found the answer to the question that had been bothering me all this time.

I returned to my own time, tired but satisfied. In, fact, I was so exhausted that I lay on the ground a long time, looking up at the sky. This was the answer I had been looking for, this was what I had wanted to find out I knew now why the falls had shrunk, and the lake, deprived of its main source of water had disappeared. The huge boulder, and the silt of centuries had plugged up the spring. Well, that was that! I could stop now and eat. I went home and Maw had one of her famous stews ready for me.

"Give up what you are doing, Boy," said Paw, "Or I'll have to order you to. You look like a plucked chicken. I don't like it. You stop whatever it is you are doing and get some flesh back on your bones."

"It's all over, Paw", I didn't even stop eating to answer him "I found out what I wanted to, and now I can take it easy from now on."

"I should hope so," Grandmaw rocked her chair about a foot higher. "Why don't you get yourself a nice girl and go somewhere's with her?"

"Why, Jeb," a mocking voice sounded in my ear, "don't tell me you are really sitting down and eating!" Mellie came in through the window, nodded to my Folks and sat down beside me.

"Hi, Mellie, Want some stew?"

"No, thank you. Has the wise one finished his job yet?"

"Yep," I said, "I've finished that problem and I've finished the stew. What say, we go outside and sit under the oak?"

"Any news?" I asked when we had settled on the grass.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mellie stopped smiling and shook her head.

"It's all settled, Jeb. The sheriff came back from New York yesterday. He says they got nowhere. The people who are building the factory just can't see that one site is any better than the other. They talked a lot about all the advantages the factory would bring to the valley. They sat that they won't have to tear down any of the houses in the village, only Miz' Muzzy's, if they build here, so they can't see why anyone is upset. They think he is very smart."

I felt my hair rising, but didn't try to say anything.

"But the people in the village *are* upset," Mellie went on. They're wild. Miz' Muzzy just cries all the time and Aunt Sade and Miz' Cummins are all set to move, soon as the factory is built."

"That's too bad. Wish those men who went to New York had been able to do something."

Mellie stood up.

"I've got to go home," she said. "I'm glad you've returned to normal, anyway, even if you do look awful. Why don't you get yourself some new clothes? Then I'd like to go dancing with you again. It was hard finding a new partner."

"What do you mean, a new partner? And I *will* get some new clothes and I'll put on some weight, you'll see, now that I have time to eat again."

"I should hope so. Why don't you get some nice tan khaki pants and a nice pair of shiny surveyor's boots, like that advance man for the factory? He certainly is strutting around these days, now that the company has approved his plans. Well, anyhow, he dances well."

I jumped up.

"Dance!" I shouted." You mean to tell me Melisande Gowrie, that you went dancing with him?"

"Of course. You were nowhere to be found out, and I wanted to know what kind of a person he was."

"Why you..."

"Yes, I found out. I found out that he is almost as stuck up as you are and just as conceited!" and she took off down the mountain leaving me with my mouth open.

"That tears it. I'm not going to let that feller hang around this valley any longer and I'm not going to let him take my girl dancing. I'm going to do something about it *if I have to flood the valley again!*"

I went back to where I figured the plugged up spring was. I couldn't use any spells to uncover the boulder, because I had been forbidden to use any on this mountain. I borrowed a spade from Honey and started digging. It was the most awful work I had ever undertaken. I was weak and worn out, and time was running out on me! I felt that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I would never be able to uncover the boulder, move it to one side, and start the spring running again before work started on the factory. And once work had started, I couldn't stop it, because, as the Elders were always pointing out, that would be interfering with human progress, and that I would not be allowed to do.

I realized that I would have to have help. I called Mellie.

She didn't understand at first what I wanted her to do.

"Mellie, all you have to do is to move this soil off a boulder that's buried there."

"You mean DIG?" she eyed the spade with horror.

"No, just use one little old spell."

"NO, Jeb. No. You've been forbidden to use spells on this mountain. Remember? The Folk said 'no spells and no incantations.'"

"I know, that's why I'm asking *you* to do it. *I* won't be using the spells, *you* will be."

"No, I won't do it."

"Mellie, you like the people in the valley, don't you?"

"Yes, I do, but I'm not going to break the Law of the Folk for them."

"You're not going to break any laws. You weren't forbidden to make spells I was."

"Oh, you! You've always got an answer! I won't listen to you."

"Look, Mellie, if you don't help me, I'll have to do it by hand, and look at me! I'm skin and bone now I'll just fade away." I made my voice quiver as I held out my thin hands.

"Then give it up."

I let my shoulders droop as I stooped down and picked up the spade. She flashed around on me.

"Oh, all right, all RIGHT! But I don't know any spells."

"Yes, you do. This is just displacement of matter, not destruction of it. Just displace it from here to somewhere else."

"Where?" she pinched her lips together stubbornly.

"Why, anywhere" I looked around. "There, d o w n h i l l from here. That way the rains can't wash it back in again."

She glared at me then faced the place I had pointed out. Some dirt rose, wavered a little, then settled down again almost in the same place.

"There, I told you I didn't know any of your old spells. I never bothered to learn any. I never had to. I don't know any strong enough," she burst into angry tears.

"Look, Mellie, I'll show you the right one." I didn't dare to say it out loud, so I wrote it in the dirt. Her eyes grew big as she read it.

"Oh, Jeb, do you think I ought to?"

"Yes, I do. Go ahead and say it and put the dirt way down there."

She took a deep breath and chanted the spell in her clear, sweet voice. I knew it was a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strong spell, but even I was awed as the dirt rose in a sheet, curved in the air and fell further down the mountain. When the air had cleared there was a deep hollow in front of us, and deep in the hollow was a huge boulder.

"There! I did what you wanted me to do. Now let's go."

"No, wait, Mellie, we have to move the boulder."

"I will not! No sir! I've done enough."

"Please, Mellie."

"No, and there's no use your saying 'please, Mellie'. I'm going home this minute. If you want to stay up on this mountain and look at that old rock, it's no affair of mine!" She took off without a backward glance.

I was in despair. I was so near to the end. I knew that I'd never be able to move that boulder with the spade. It was too big, too solid, too deeply imbedded. I called up the rain thinking that maybe that would erode the soil around it, but it only washed more dirt down. I used the spade and made a trough on the down side of the mountain, but I couldn't move that rock. At last I had to give up. Too exhausted to do anything more, I lay on the ground and covered my eyes with my arms. I just wanted to go to sleep and sleep for six months. I would never feel rested again.

Soft gentle fingers brushed the hair back from my forehead and a little warm hand slipped into one of mine.

"Melisande!" I shouted and sprang up, "You came back!"

"I must be as crazy as you are," she flashed at me. "You lying here like a sleeping one! All worn out and just skin and bones! You looked...you looked..." she caught her breath and didn't finish.

"I'm glad you came back Mellie. Look, there's just one more thing for you to do". I pulled her forward towards the rock. "Look, all you have to do is to displace that rock."

"All I've got to do!" she faced me, her cheeks scarlet her green eyes flashing. I'm not at all sure but that I saw sparks coming from her red hair, she was so mad.

"Please, Mellie, just this one little spell?" I wrote it on the ground.

For a moment, after she had read the spell, I was afraid she would refuse. She hesitated, then, shrugging her shoulders, "Oh, all right. 'In for a penny, in for a pound.' Where do you want it put, Your Majesty?"

"Just downhill, just anyplace downhill."

"Well, here goes." she studied the spell, then, facing the rock, she chanted it loud and clear.

At first, nothing happened, then she put her will power into it, facing it, taut and strong. Slowly, gradually the huge boulder moved, up a lit-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tle, over, over... It was just at the lip of the trough I had dug when I felt her strength ebbing. She held on by sheer will power, but she was weakening. I hurled my own will power hard against the rock. It hesitated on the edge of its old hole, then slowly toppled over and rolled a few inches down the slope!

Mellie sank sobbing on the ground and never noticed when I put my arms around her. I held her silently for a while.

"I'll never do that again, never!"

"You won't have to. I'll never ask you to again. That was a wonderful thing you did, and I am grateful."

"What was so wonderful about it?" she asked tiredly. "*You* taught me the spells. But what did you want to move that old rock for, anyway?"

I glanced around at the crater left by the boulder and let out a shout.

"Look, Mellie, look! It's started again." And I pointed down at the water that was seeping slowly into the hole.

Mellie looked down:

"What's started again? I don't see anything."

"The water, girl, the water! The spring is working again, after centuries." I dragged her down the slope towards the waterfall.

"Look, Mellie, what does the valley look like?"

"Like a valley."

"Like a dry lake?"

She turned and looked again, then faced me.

"Jeb Enders, you tell me *now this minute* what you have been up to."

I was afraid to tell her the whole story. I was afraid to admit I had travelled back in time, so I pretended it was all theory on my part.

"I was thinking that the valley used to be a lake." I said. "I think that's why it still gets boggy in the spring. and I think this waterfall fed the lake, and I think that spring you just uncovered fed the waterfall."

Mellie looked at me for a moment, her head on one side, then her eyes got big and shining.

"Jeb Enders, are you going to flood that valley again?" She's just too darn smart sometimes.

"Me flood it?" I let indignation shake my voice. "No, of course not. The Waterfall is going to flood it. I'm not making water flow downhill, that's the natural law. And I'm not making it fall over the edge of the cliff, there's no place else for it to go. And since there's no place for it to go. And since there's no place for it to go but down, why the valley will have to receive it."

"Oh Jeb, you think you are so smart, you have all the answers. But I'm scared! If you flood the valley the humans can't build the factory there,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and that means that you are interfering with their progress."

"No, I'm not. They haven't started to build yet, so I won't be stopping them, they'll be stopping themselves."

"Oh, you," but she was laughing a little.

We stood there on the ledge, overlooking the quiet valley. The sun was setting behind the Court house in Clear Springs Junction, painting the windows facing the west, gold. The tree lined streets were clean and quiet, the humans were all in their little white horses. Just about now, they were gathered around the supper tables, the lamps lighted, the families together. Miz' Muzzy's house stood out on its little rise, quiet, safe. Across the low lands, so soon to be covered with a lake, only the Hollow was in shadow.

"That's where Old Man Walters lives." I pointed to the hollow. "He wanted me to help him, and now I did."

I let out a whoop!

"Wow!" I said to the startled Mellie," He always is wishing that I'll get my come uppance. Well, maybe now he is going to get his! Look, when the water floods this valley, the way I hope it will, Old Man Walters is going to wake up one of these days with his litle old hut SPANG in the middle of the lake!"

NEXT MONTH—

IVAN T. SANDERSON, world famous explorer, author and TV personality returns with another startling article on Flying Saucers—

UFO—FRIEND OR FOE

LESTER DEL REY discusses SCIENCE FICTION AND THE FLYING SAUCER MYTH

and don't miss—

NELSON BOND's delightful story, LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK

EVELYN E. SMITH's THE MOST SENTIMENTAL MAN ON EARTH

THOMAS N. SCORTIA's JOHN ROBERT AND THE DRAGON'S EGG

LEE CHAYTOR's exciting novelet, THE TREASURE OF MARS

—*in* FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

AMERICA'S MOST TALKED ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

landing for midge

by . . . LEE CORREY

All agreed she shouldn't have made the trip. Birth in free-flight, under zero-gravity conditions, wasn't any joke!

HERB SEYMOUR agreed; it was a *fine* time indeed to have the antennas on the landing radar demolished by micro-meteors

Captain Dalton wasn't very happy either. The Space Ship *Daphnis* was due to land at White Sands Spaceport within twelve hours, and they would need that landing radar badly. The skipper turned to where Alan Wescott, the radarman, was hanging in mid-air, his lanky legs wrapped around the companionway ladder. "Are you certain the astrogation radar can't be rigged to use the White Sands' landing control system, Mister Wescott?"

"Absolutely certain," Alan replied, inverting himself so that his feet pointed toward the bulkhead labelled "FLOOR". His boyish face was serious, but the lock of wild, sandy hair which usually hung in front of his eyes now floated straight up on top of his head, making him look like a Mescalero Indian wearing a war bonnet.

"The blessed radars at White Sands won't work with our astrogation radar. Different radar band, different rep-

Lee Correy, well known to our readers and in this field, contributes a warmly sympathetic story of the concern of all the crew members of the Daphnis *as Midge's hour came nearer and nearer and they faced the possibilty that it might even happen just as they were landing the ship.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rate, and no provisions for control or telementary commands."

"Well, fix the landing radar then. I don't want to risk this ship."

"I wish I *could* fix it." Alan mumbled, then went on with a note of discouragement in his voice, "Skipper, that pea-sized hunk of sky-junk was *really* travelling! It tore out the entire antenna —even ripped up the wave-guides and matching networks. I can't possibly fix it without a completely-equipped precision machine shop."

The skipper turned to Herb. "Mister Seymour, can you handle a blind, manual landing?"

Herb knew he hadn't made a manual landing since his days as a cadet at the Institute flying the KT-44 training rockets. He had probably lost his touch, but he said, "Looks like I'll have to, skipper. Hobson's choice."

Glancing at Les Hadley, the radioman, the skipper gave a resigned sigh and said, "Mister Hadley, get in touch with White Sands and arrange for the necessary clearances. Urgent priority is good enough; there's no real emergency."

No, there was no real emergency...yet. But Herb Seymour wasn't worrying about the manual landing right then. Nor were his thoughts with the *Daphnis*' passengers or cargo. It was Midge.

The same was true of the rest of the crew. Everybody had known she shouldn't have made this trip; it was timing things too close. Birth in free-flight under zero-gravity conditions is no joke. Besides being an awkward proposition due to the absence of weight, the very lack of gravity itself causes —for some unknown reason not yet apparent to doctors — a change in the endocrine balance of the body. During birth, this can be fatal for a mother, as previous experience had shown. Space surgeons and spaceport doctors had a hide-bound rule against permitting pregnant women aboard a space ship.

But Midge had come along anyway, for nobody seemed to know for certain just how far along she was—and she couldn't tell them, either. Everybody knew they were taking a chance, but the doctor had okayed it, feeling it might be better to get her back to Terra under normal gravity.

And now a manual landing on top of that! Herb was going to be forced to bounce her around in her delicate condition, but it couldn't be helped.

People with no experience in space flight may have trouble comprehending the seriousness of the *Daphnis*' loss of landing radar. Being

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a non-scheduled shuttle between Luna and Terra—sort of a "mixed extra" carrying both passengers and cargo—she was now on the approach leg of her 46-hour flight from Dianaport.

It is not easy to land a space ship. Compared to it, a take-off is like hitting the floor with your hat—nothing more than button-pushing. But landing means that a space ship must safely slow down from velocities of several miles-per-second to almost zero...and in time to touch the ground safely. Human pilots *can* do it with lots of radar help from the ground, but it is safer, simpler, and more accurate to let the landing be controlled from the ground, by radio. Fixed stations whose locations are known exactly on a planet's surface track the incoming ship and advise tremendous massive, and incredibly complex electronic "brain" computers of the ship's instantaneous speed and location. The computers replace the pilot's brain, figuring the landing maneuver in a fraction of a second with far greater accuracy than any human pilot could manage. Instructions are then flashed to radar transmitters which in turn relay the instructions up to the ship's own tiny autopilot—a compact elecronic gadget made up of transistor circuits and tiny servo motors—flies the ship by the directions given it from the computers on the ground. It sounds complicated, but it is actually a simpler task then that which confronted the guided missile experts of a century ago. The target—the landing pad—is known, and it is surrounded by radar and guidance equipment.

However, the system requires radar, and the *Daphnis* had had her radar antennas fall prey to a large grain of sand travelling at fifty miles per second.

HERB AND Captain Dalton were forced to rough out the problem on paper before the ship entered the atmosphere. While it would have been a simple task for the ground computers, it took them several hours. To plunge boldy into the ocean of air surrounding the planet would be sheer suicide—at least at their present velocity of several miles-per-second. They had to sneak in, so to speak, by letting the atmosphere slow them down gradually. It was a ticklish proposition; if they came in too fast, the ship would burn like a meteor. Finally, the velocity down to several times the speed of sound, the *Daphnis* would boom through the upper air, her needle prow pointing toward the spot where White Sands would be when she got there. At the proper moment, miles in the air over her landing spot,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her speed would be low enough to allow Herb to pull her up into a full stall, getting her tail down for a landing on the column of flame that was her jet.

Situations such as this make space flight no adventure for those weak of heart or nerve. It causes pilots and skippers to get grey at a tender age. It also separates the men from the boys, making a good pilot well worth his mass in bonds and insurance. And very few pilots lack confidence in themselves; it is, in fact, almost a prime requisite for pilots.

Herb wasn't overly worried, although the situation wasn't anything to joke about. But he was worried about Midge.

The two men finished their calculations with about an hour left to go before entering he atmosphere, so they tried to get one last moment of relaxation.

They didn't get it. Les Hadley, who had been relaying the reports of the radar stations tracking them from below, clambered down the ladder, looking like one of his simian ancestors scrambling down a tree. He turned over and told the skipper, "White Sands advises us to go into low orbit and stay there until the Company can send some replacement parts up to us."

The skipper looked shocked. "What? They expect us to sit up here on our duffs? What in billy-blue-blazes is going on down there?" he bellowed.

"The sky is full. The next two days happen to be the ripe time for Mars-departure. Everybody wants to leave, and the traffic is something fierce."

That called for cursing, Captain Dalton obeyed his whim. This new development meant being put on ice to wait until White Sands had time to talk them in. It called for a complete recomputation of trajectory as well.

Herb waited until the skipper had vented off his head of steam, then asked anxiously, "Captain, what about Midge?"

"Well, what about her?"

"She's due any time, you know. This is two days we didn't count on. There'll be hell to pay if..."

"Great Judas Priest! Well, if we have to we'll ask for emergency status."

"There might not be time to do it, skipper," Herb pointed out. "These things sometimes happen quickly."

Captain Dalton shrugged. "We have no justification right now. No facts, just guesswork. So we'll have to sit tight. Warm up the calculator again, Mister Seymour."

"And me with a date in El Paso tonight," Les complained as he headed forward again.

Herb went to the intercom

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and called the *Daphnis*' shipmaster, Morrie Ralston, the man in charge of cargo and creature comforts. "How's Midge, Morrie?"

"Okay so far," the shipmaster's voice replied. "Not as spry as usual and a little cranky, but I've managed to make her somewhat comfortable."

"Okay, keep an eye on things. We're busy, so I can't get back to see her. And pass the word around that we'll be a little late to land. We're ordered into low orbit to wait."

"Oh-oh! The passengers aren't going to like it!"

"You might remind them to read the fine print on the back of their tickets; we can't be sued because of this."

"How come we get stacked in orbit?" Morrie wanted to know.

"Mars-departure, and we have no landing radar."

"When did *this* happen?"

"We kissed a rock awhile ago. Don't let the passengers know; it'll only worry them."

"Roger! But...But...*what about Midge!*"

"That's why I said keep an eye on her."

Another hour rolled by while Herb and the skipper went over the calculations again. They found they had enough propellant to get into orbit, but not enough to complete the landing maneuver if they did so. If they followed White Sands' instructions, they would be stuck until a ship could be sent up with more fuel. Captain Dalton was trying to figure out a scheme for getting down at another spaceport somewhere when Morrie Ralston called again.

"Still planning to go into orbit?" he asked.

Herb told him they were.

"Better see if White Sands won't change their minds. Or else figure out some way to spin the ship to get some pseudo-gravity."

"You mean...?"

"Yes. I think Midge is about to go into labor!"

"Oh, Great Globular Clusters, no!"

"Oh, but yes!"

"Stay with her! See if some of the passengers will lend a hand!"

"What are you going to do?"

"Depends on the skipper," Herb told him and switched off. He brought Captain Dalton up to date. "Skipper!" he finished, "we've got to do *something!* We've got to get out of free-fall, or we're liable to lose Midge!"

The skipper's reaction was immediate. He didn't even bother with the intercom, but yelled through the forward hatch, "Mister Hadley! Tell White Sands to clear the sky for us! By god, *we're coming in,* traffic jam or not! We're landing this bucket on schedule! Or before, if we can manage it!"

The White Sands Traffic Center was pretty stuffy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about it until Captain Dalton got on the mike, told them exactly what was going on, quoted them several regulations from the Space Code, and finished by remarking that the *Daphnis* would damned-well come in *without* clearance if she had to, even it if meant being grounded and placed on the black list.

"Oh!" the White Sands talker replied knowingly. "Well, why didn't you say something about this in the first place? Continue your present approach while we juggle things down here. Do you want a doctor at the landing pad?"

"Yes, if he's the right kind," the skipper fired back.

THE *DAPHNIS*' first pass through the atmosphere was right on schedule. Five successive times she glanced off the ocean of air, her wings lifting her back into space again after the killing some of her tremendous velocity. Morrie reported in at frequent intervals, indicating that the going was rough. "Hurry! Get on the ground!" he urged.

Then came the final dive into the atmosphere. Herb had his hands full with the ship controls, keeping one eye glued to the astrogation radar for rough data and the other eye on the skin thermocouple gauges. Captain Dalton lay on his couch with his head in the conning blister, coaching Herb. In spite of her two-hundred-foot length, the *Daphnis* bucked like a spring colt as shock waves hammered at her and supersonic yaw threw her around the sky.

Les had patched their headphones into the radio channel to White Sands, and Herb listened intently to the reports that were being relayed up to them from the global radar net tracking them from below. Captain Dalton was a bit more nervous than usual; being an old spacehand, he had ridden the pilot's couch on many a ship, and was with Herb in spirit all the way. This was strictly the pilot's show now. Herb was doing his best; in fact, every member of the crew was knocking himslf to do a good job and get Midge back on the ground as soon as humanly possible.

The voice of the White Sands traffic controller came through at regular intervals. The computers on the ground were in operation on the *Daphnis*' landing problem, but their data had to be relayed verbally to the ship. "You are four miles south of the groove, *Daphnis*. Velocity within safe limits. Tamalpais Radar is tracking you now. We are holding all incoming and outgoing traffic for you now."

High over California the ship sped, leaving a broad trail of ionization like a meteor which made radar tracking easier but less accurate.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Herb started to rely entirely on White Sands' instructions, ignoring all ship-based radar. With less than a minute to go before stalling, he called back to Morrie, "Any news?"

"I don't know how much longer she can stand this, Herb!" Morrie replied. "For crissake, get us on the ground!"

"We're trying."

"Hello, *Daphnis*, commence your stall!" White Sands' voice cracked through his headphones.

Slowly, the ship's nose came up as Herb worked the controls.

The skipper was watching the wings and horizon. "Falling off on the right wing! Easy, easy! The skin's wrinkling; here comes the transsonic!"

The *Daphnis* shuddered in every beam. Dalton watched the wings with morbid fascination as they whipped up and down with the shadows of the shock waves playing over them. This display never failed to elicit admiration from him for the ship's rugged structure.

Then it came: full stall, the moment when everybody instinctively felt as though the ship was coming to pieces. There was that moment of free-fall so different from trajectory free-fall when everyone was jolted against their belts and had the feeling of *really* falling.

"Stand by for countdown," White Sands intoned in Herb's headphones. "Steady ... steady ... thirty seconds ... twenty ... ten ... five ... four ... three ... two ... one ..."

Herb stabbed at the red button on the panel. The *Daphnis*' tail belched a cloud of white vapor, then a sudden column of incandescent gases emerged. The gyros locked in and began sending commands to the steering nozzles, keeping the ship absolutely vertical as it fell tail-first.

Sweat stood out on his forehead and streamed back over his ears. He labored to breathe, his face distorted by the force of acceleration. But uppermost in his mind was the thought, *Got to make it! Got to make it now! Got to make it easy for Midge!*

"Stand by for cut-off! Stand by for cut-off! Fifteen ... ten ..."

With effort, Herb moved his hand over the cut-off switch that would terminate thrust.

Dalton was pinned on his belly, looking downward through the conning hatch and grunting, "Bear north ... north ... west ... a hair north ... Good ... good ... good..."

"And two ... and one ... and CUT!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He felt the sudden, hard jar as the rocket engine gave one last, blubbering push. There was less than a second of falling, then a terrific jar that pushed the wind from his chest with a mighty "Ugh!" The ship rocked a moment, then came to rest.

"You are on the ground, *Daphnis*!"

Herb had missed the landing spot by less than fifty feet.

THEY DIDN'T waste any time securing the control room and unstrapping. Alan and Les were right on their heels as they climbed down the ladder into the passenger compartments. Herb kept on going down to the lock deck, ignoring both the congratulations and complaints of the passengers. He had other, more serious things on his mind.

By the time he'd undogged the lock doors and opened them to admit the thick, heady air of Terra, the servicing platforms were already being swung against the ship's side. A tall old weatherbeaten man wearing a broad-brimmed felt hat and cowboy boots was riding up on the first platform. When it came against the lock, he stepped into the ship, asking, "You all call for a vet?"

Herb nodded and led him forward to where Morrie had bedded Midge down in a towell-lined box.

The veterinarian looked down at her and grinned. He knew full well that spacemen loved their ship cats. No other terrestrial is as much at home in space-borne ship, nor has the natural cleanliness required, nor is as affectionate. For the lonely men of space, they filled the need for the companionship of another Terra-born species. Their antics in free-fall and their natural traits as acrobats were essential as a recreational relief. All space crews loved their cats, and it was normal procedure for them to treat their felines as human beings, going far out of their way for them. However, the veterinarian observed, this situation was one for the books.

Morrie looked up, sweat on his face. He grinned, too. "Hell, doc, she's better adapted to space than women of our own kind! We don't need you now. She's doing fine!"

Three tiny kittens, their eyes still sealed and their tiny paws pink, lay nestled against Midge's calico side. One was the spitting image of the mother, and the other two were yellow.

The crew of the *Daphnis* gathered around and looked down, smiles of relief on their faces and pride shining in their eyes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

voyage beyond the night

by...JOHN VICTOR PETERSON

He bent to touch a roll of papyrus, began to raise it, and dropped it—shocked. The papyrus was already dust.

KEN CHAPMAN stood in the shortening morning shadow of the great pyramid of Cheops at Sakkara, Egypt, and watched, tremulous with expectancy as kneeling native masons chiselled furiously between massive limestone blocks roofing a previously undiscovered vault.

"It could be Cheops' tomb at last," Ostrander said excitedly, his lean, tanned face alight with the enthusiasm of an old time dedicated archaeologist.

Chapman surveyed him with a twisted smile. "Let's not get our hopes that high, Ed. It's more likely the tomb of Cheops' second soul ship, mate to the one el Malakh found three—yes, it *was* three years ago—in '54, or perhaps that of an unknown Pharaoh such as Emery found in 55. Cheops' tomb is well hidden; if el Malakh hasn't found it I doubt very much if we will!"

"Sometimes you forget that you're reputed to be one of the world's leading Egyptologists," Ostrander reminded him.

"I *was*, maybe," Chapman admitted, "but after Eric Stromberg's novel came out dedicated to me as his tech-

John Victor Peterson returns after a much too long absence from these pages with this haunting story of the problem faced by the Archaeologist who realized, suddenly, how Eric Stromberg, scientist and novelist, had this strange ability to set himself into the minds of Old Egypt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nical advisor I think my reputation went to hell and gone, to put it mildly. I hadn't checked half of the so-called facts in that book and the half I hadn't checked were all highly inaccurate."

"Well, you can call him on that when you get back in the States."

"So do you think a retraction in the Saturday Review and the Times would stop making me a laughingstock in archaelogy!" Chapman shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Well, you weren't in the States when the book was published!"

"All I can say, Ed, is I wish Eric Stromberg had stuck to his electronics and other pursuits and left the writing of historical novels to the well-informed."

A workman cried out then and Chapman and Ostrander ran forward together.

The masons had broken through the tight seal of pink gypsum and had splintered six feet down through the adjoining limestone blocks into empty space.

Chapman leaned forward and scented a faint incense drifting up, a perfume abruptly evanescent which he never could describe.

He turned to a swarthy, dwarfed interpreter. "Kader, tell them to enlarge the opening."

"I'll get a flashlight," Ostrander said and hurried away, heading toward a supply tent.

As the workmen resumed their chiselling, Chapman observed that the limestone was faulted. He started to cry out a warning when a section of the vault's roof suddenly dropped inward with a following crash of splintering wood.

"Damn!" he cried and leaned forward to observe what certainly irreparable damage had been done beneath, switching on the flashlight which Ostrander pressed into his hand.

The section of limestone lay amid splintered planking, rope coils and curiously speartipped oars. It was obviously a soul ship, its interior hull carved in the bedrock, its decks consisting of heavy wooden planking.

"Fetch a rope," he told the interpreter.

"It's a big one," Ostrander said, "bigger than the one el Malakh found. It must be Cheops' other soul ship."

"We'll soon know. You'd better send the news to el Malakh; I'm going down."

Chapman was lowered into the dusty vault. He realized instantly that despite the faint trace of perfume he had first scented the vault's gypsum seal had sometime through the ages been broken; somewhere the musty darkness was festooned with cobwebs.

He stood there, first in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

truder in five thousand years, shining a twentieth century flashlight upon antiquity, and knew that he was violating the deck of a Pharaoh's ship, a ship which the Egyptian religion of the Fourth Dynasty had taught should bear only the soul of the dead Pharaoh.

That religion had taught that the funerary ships must be built in pairs, one to bear the Pharaoh in his voyage over his lands in daytime, the other to pursue the sun beyond the night when the sun was beneath the then-thought flat earth.

The beam of his light played upon the cabin on the soul ship's deck. He walked toward it and looked within, saw plates and utensils waiting still for phantom hands to bring them to phantom lips, saw pottery vessels which once held food intended to nourish a pharaoh's ghost.

He looked around the cabin, certain he would find the selfsame things that other soul ships bore: effigies of beautiful dancers to delight a longdead pharaoh's soul, fine jewelry; but saw instead copper tools, finely-carved ivory images and other things which, though indigenous to the Fourth Dynasty culture, were not normally found in the vaults of soul ships.

He bent to touch a roll of papyrus, began to raise it and dropped it in sudden shock. Under the slight impact the papyrus turned to dust. His flashlight shone on something else. Still bent, he picked it up.

He was glad then that he stood alone. The shock set him trembling as a chill wind sighed across fifty centuries of lost time.

Ken Chapman knew then that he held in his hand the future of the only world that he had ever known.

He slipped the object into his pocket, realizing that his theft of the relic would be punished if discovered but swearing to Almighty God that no one here would ever find him out.

He went back to the shattered deck beneath the opening and tugged on the rope.

Once on surface he said abruptly to Ostrander, "I'm leaving you in charge, Ed. I've got to get back to New York."

"But, Ken—"

"I'll be back in a few days. Perhaps I'll tell you why I've had to go then."

Perhaps, he thought, *but hardly likely!*

A turboprop airliner brought Ken Chapman from Cairo to London, a Super-Constellation from London to New York. He boarded one of the new jetcopters as soon as he'd cleared Customs at New York and was sped to Newark. Total elaspsed time: 26 hours. He had not slept in 32.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He took a cab, gave the address of Stromberg Electronics, Inc., tried desperately to relax and wound up sitting, tense and trembling on the edge of the seat, cursing each second of delay in the heavy traffic on the Pulaski Skyway.

It was typical of Eric Stromberg, he thought, to locate his laboratories in the nearest place to nowhere one could find in the metropolitan area. But, he reflected, many a genius has been somewhat of a hermit, too. Eric was a genius; there was no question of that. He had concurrently made fortunes in plastics and electronics. He thoroughly understood the Einsteinian equations. He was fully conversant in seventeen languages. His twin passions now were novel writing and historical research.

The driver turned off the Skyway now, following a downward ramp to the reclaimed area which only months before had been useless swampland. Eric had sunk millions into the project but, Chapman reflected, it would pay off. Things Eric touched had a habit of turning into exceedingly profitable enterprises.

The laboratories lay on an artificial island, low, windowless buildings, featureless save for the doors. Chapman saw that the only vehicular access was by a gleaming drawbridge which appeared to lead to the receiving and shipping section. A spidery footbridge arched from the visitors' parking area to the main office building.

"Wait," Chapman said to the cabbie and, dismounting, hurried to the footbridge, fighting consummate fatigue with every step.

An electronic eye opened the door; he stepped inside to face a stunning blonde receptionist.

"I must see Mr. Stromberg immediately," he said. "My name is Kenneth Chapman."

He could see his name meant nothing to her. She was regarding his unshaven face and unkempt clothes a bit bemusedly. By her expression she was questioning his right to be here in this spotlessly efficient office; then her expression changed as the urgency in his face became apparent to her and she flicked up an intercom switch, saying,

"Mr. Stromberg, a Mr. Kenneth Chapman is here—"

Stromberg met him at the door with strong handclasp.

"Sorry about the book," he said. "The publisher had a deadline to meet so I couldn't hold the final chapters for checking. Thank goodness there aren't many Egyptologists in the world. I've a runaway best seller; the general public didn't read the few reviews that pointed out the inaccuracies. Not that I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wouldn't like to have had all the facts right!"

"There's little known about the Fourth Dynasty," Chapman said. "Do you know, it's a pity we can't find out more. I think we will."

"Yes," Stromberg said flatly, his expressionless eyes searching Chapman's face. "But, Ken, tell me something: why are you here?"

The archaeologist hesitated. His right hand moved toward his pocket; then paused. He raised it to his breast pocket instead and took a cigarette in his trembling fingers.

As he lighted and inhaled he glanced around the room at its many paintings, some depicting the building of the pyramids, others slave girls dancing, the painting which Stromberg had first purchased only to admire but which had prompted him to write the so-successful novel, *Wench For A Pharaoh*.

"I had to know something, Eric," he finally said. "Are you proposing to write a sequel?"

Stromberg's eyes were intent upon his face. "Why?"

"Are you?"

"Well, yes," Stromberg said slowly.

"With authentic detail this time?"

"Are you psychic?"

"Perhaps." "When will you be in Egypt?"

"In a few months. Maybe a little longer. I can't tell precisely now."

"I hope I'll see you, Eric, but if I don't, good luck!" Chapman said, clasping the big man's hand. He turned toward the door, turned back. "So long, Eric," he said levelly.

Stromberg smiled at him with a deep confidence.

Chapman walked slowly across the footbridge, paused at the midpoint of the span and brought the object from his pocket. He realized now that he could have phoned from Cairo, that he had known he could never show Eric what he had found. He took one last look at the minute imprinting on the metal plate: TEMPORAL TRAVELER — STROMBERG ELECTRONICS, INC.—9/11/59; then flipped it from trembling fingers into the water beneath the bridge.

He wouldn't be in Egypt after *that* date. He wouldn't be there to bid Eric Stromberg goodbye, knowing it was a oneway voyage beyond the dark night of the ages, knowing that, although the impact of Eric's knowledge would help bring a longgone civilization up from a neolithic culture, the man's mission was doomed, for the sequel to *Wench For A Pharaoh* would be written on papyrus, papyrus which would crumble—which had crumbled to dust at the touch of his questing hand. . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

song of death

by . . . C. BIRD

He'd been hired to bring back one of the deadly Lorelei who lured men to a willing and joyous death, year after year.

GREED was stronger than the m o l y b d a t e-ferratomic mixture burning in the ship's pile. Greed was stronger than the rays from the sun called Ages, burning ever brighter in his plates. Greed had driven him completely across the twin galaxies, had sent him on a mission everyone swore was doomed to failure. Greed was burning in his head and in his belly, and he had sworn he would return.

Clarkson watched the burning blue-green globe that was Ages grow more huge in his vision. He turned the selectors to "fine tune" and picked out the planetary system. There it was . . . just as the charts said. Ages IX, ninth planet out from that furnace of blue-green agony.

He set the ship on its way —plotting far outside the IX orbit, away from the sun— with a few deft jabs at the comp. Then he got up slowly and dropped down out of his webbing. His airsoles made a soft plop on the deck, and he walked quickly to the drop-hole, swung down the pole to the lower levels. At the sphincter-lock to the steerage compartment, he

C. Bird is the pseudonym of a wellknown and prolific young SF writer, perhaps the most talked about of the newer writers in the field. Here, inspired by our cover, is his story of what happened when the beautiful Norla, unaware of her peril, combed her hair as she sang her age-old song.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

threw a knife-switch, and watched as a green-faced dial swung its needle to EMPTY. Then he palmed the sphincter open, and clicked on the fluoros. He went inside as the lights blossomed in the ceiling. The compartment was still damp—trickles of water flushing down the drain in the deckplates.

"This'll do just fine," he said aloud.

"When I get down, I empty out this Earth water somewhere far way from where I set down, and when I make my catch, I fill it up again with Ages IX water. Cute. And worth a billion dollars."

He grinned to himself, and rubbed his stubby hands across his puffy, stubbly chin. He was a solidly-built man, almost the image of a pale, slightly underweight Buddha. He had been trying for a long time to make a classical, easy buck; this was the last attempt. He knew success was in his hind pocket.

He checked the bracings of the watertight hold, checked the filtration and feeder outlets, and left the hold, sealing it behind himself.

In the drive room he checked his pile, made certain it was doubly-reinforced—in case of crash, which he had a strong hunch was what was going to happen—and returned to the pilot's seat.

Ages IX was coming up all blue-green and brown. Almost ninety-five per cent water, that planet. Just the dull brown of rock islands here and there. Just nicely coming up, and he settled back into his webbing to watch that billion grow in the plates.

Across the plates flashed the mental image of the men who had hired him. Their motives were the basest, he knew, but it didn't really matter a damn and a half to him. If they wanted to exploit her in a carnival, just fine. Each man has the duty to look out for himself, devil take the tail-most, and Clarkson was looking out this time.

He had been hired on a fool's errand, and he was sure the men who had outfitted the ship thought the same. Go out to that jinx planet, Ages IX, and bring back one of the deadly Lorelei women who sang there? Over a hundred ships had tried it, for one or another reason, and they never came back. Ships in twos had tried, and one had seen the other crash. A ship that had *just* cut inside the atmosphere had heard the songs, and it had barely escaped to return and explain what the the danger of Ages IX was; but to try making a landing, and what was more...to *capture* a Lorelei...that was the sheer rear-end of asininity.

But Clarkson wasn't worried. He hummed in a mono-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tone to himself for a moment, and settled back to watch that watery billion billow in his eyes.

He heard it less than a mile into the full density of atmosphere. It was sweet and splendid—he s u p p o s e d—and it rang up to him t h r o u g h the clouds and across the winds. He could see now why mere earplugs would not work: this was a song that was heard with the mind, not with the ears. It was a song of utter loneliness and death, deeper than anything he could imagine.

"It's a b o u t t i m e," he chuckled out loud, and threw the webbing aside. He leaned forward and pressed a specially-rigged button.

From the ship's tubes an angry blurt of flame spat, and a trailer of thick, black smoke erupted into the air.

The radon-trackers had already caught the source of the songs, and he aimed the ship toward that spot. He didn't bother analyzing how the songs could float up to him. Perhaps telepathic, perhaps some freak of conductivity, it really didn't matter. There were women down there who sang strange songs that lured ships to their deaths, just as in "The Odyssey", and he was bound to get one of those women, bring her back and collect.

The ship plummeted, spiraled, careened in weird arcs, did everything a downing ship *would* do. As the gravity yanked more fully at him, Clarkson slipped out of the webbing, and into a suit with clumsy movements. He fastened the stunbead to the forefinger of the left hand glove. Then he positioned h i m s e l f near the hatch, slumped into the webbing he had rigged for this purpose, and undogged the port. The pressure of air outside kept it closed as he fell, but he knew when the ship crashed, it would fall open, and spill him out.

"Just dandy," he beamed.

The songs still swirled and eddied about him, and the ship crashed—s o f t l y—onto the rocks of Ages IX, among the music of the Loreleis.

The m e t a l thing had crashed quite near to Norla, and she swam to it when the water about it had cooled s u f f i c i e n t l y. Her tail gleamed and shone in the blue-green water, and her long very-blonde hair was a radiant aura about her head. She stared at the metal thing; it was brighter than some of the others that she had helped lure down, and duller than others. But the hole in its side had opened as it plunged face-first into the water, and dumped out a human thing, vaguely like herself. But revoltingly ugly.

Where she had beautiful

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tail fins, *this* thing had two scrawny appendages that were obviously useless. Perhaps even atrophied. Norla looked at the thing in the red suit and the perfectly round metallic head for a few seconds. Ah, another.

Would they never learn?

Would they never realize the Swimmers of Mistal wanted no outsiders on the planet? Would they never stop coming?

She watched it a moment more, then swam around the metal hulk, and was pleasantly surprised to find that one of the holes on it was reflective. What a treat!

She hauled herself up onto the brown rocks, and drew her beautiful ornate comb from a flesh-pouch in her scaly thigh. Then she began combing out the snarls in her long, golden hair.

Stroke after stroke, till every kink was gone. Oh, it was wonderful sitting there. Every now and then she took a glance at the human thing sprawled face-up on the rocks, but after a while she realized the life-essence was gone from it. Soon it would wash into the deeper portions of the sea, and be gone, as would the metal thing.

She did not see the human thing rise and fiercely slap its thumb and forefinger together, smashing a tiny bead there into a million nothings, spraying a mist over her

But she *did* realize she was paralyzed, and that the human thing—hideous thing that it was!—was gathering her in its arms, carrying her into the metal hulk.

CLARKSON whistled happily as the ship plowed away from the watery ball that was Ages IX. The mermaid Lorelei was safely stowed in the water-filled hold, down in steerage, and he was headed back to Earth. The landing had been an extremely tricky one, but the robot-comp had done a fine job; only the front of the ship was scarred from the rocks.

The billion dollars was as good as in his hands. He had to grant them though, the singing Lorelei mermaids. They had a great lure there. No one could resist those thought-invading, thought-deadening melodies.

He whistled to himself in a monotone, and went below to look in through a one-way window at the beautiful, but deadly, creature swimming in there angrily.

"No," he murmured aloud. "No one could escape them. No one could bring a ship down on Ages IX without being killed...

"Except," he grinned, feeling the billion in his hands already, "a completely tone-deaf spaceman."

He grinned again, and went back updecks, whistling in a seedy monotone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the fuzzies

by . . . LLOYD ARTHUR ESHBACH

They were sensitive to violence or even thoughts of violence, and were capable of abandoning you — if need be.

SCOWLING, Ken Landis squinted through the driving snowfall, straining to see what lay before him in the swirling carbon dioxide blizzard. A gale whipped around the double walled plastic fishbowl that was his helmet, though he could hardly hear a sound. The vacuum between the two transparent globes and the tremendously thick insulating padding of his suit shut out almost all of the effects of the Ganymedean storm.

It was insanity, this wandering about in a world so cold that oxygen and carbon dioxide froze, where the atmosphere was a mixture of neon and methane—a world that was a vast, featureless, wind-swept plain where there was no way for a man to determine north, east, south or west—where nothing lived. Nothing, that is, save fools like him—and Herb Swain—and scores of other prospectors who plodded across this frigid hell, dragging their vacuum bottle, half-blister homes behind them.

All because of the Fuzzies!

He withdrew his left arm from the massive sleeve of his

Prospecting on bleak, fantastic Ganymede usually had its drawbacks, but still more so when you were hunting a man you had reason to believe had once tried to kill you. Lloyd Eshbach, head of Fantasy Press, returns with this story of the unusual Fuzzies and courage against fantastic odds.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

armor and touched a warm pulsating ball in the special pocket of his jacket—a living sphere about the size of a large grapefruit, a snow white, fur covered sphere which was probably the strangest life form in the Solar System. A Martian Fuzzy.

"Which way now, Nathan?" he asked casually.

The answer formed within his mind. "To your left—a bit more—now straight ahead."

"You're sure it's Swain up there? Not some other Terran?"

"It is Swain. Richard is with him."

Richard. That was Swain's Fuzzy—or, as he sometimes felt, Swain's master; no, employer. The Fuzzies never used compulsion, and they paid—paid well.

Just as he was going to pay Swain for what he had done to him! Ken's jaw set grimly. For more than a year he'd been promising himself there'd be a day of reckoning—and it looked as though it had finally come. When he and Swain met *this* time—

He put the thought aside as he became aware of the distress emanating from Nathan, his Fuzzy. Fuzzies liked people—likeable people, that is—and they were incredibly sensitive to violence or thoughts of violence. They would not stay with a criminal, for example; and to be forsaken by your Fuzzy on Ganymede was sure death. Strange—and macabre—how a Fuzzy "left". They simply died!

A question recurred in Ken's mind. With the natural Fuzzy aversion to violence, why was Nathan guiding him to Swain? He gave a mental shrug. There was a lot he didn't know about the Fuzzies—a lot that no Terran knew.

Odd how all this had started. The first ship to land on Mars had found the Fuzzies living in the depths of vast, abysmal caves, the only intelligent life form on the planet. Intelligent they must be, since they were perfect telepaths. Any Fuzzy could communicate with any other Fuzzy—or all others—at any time over any conceivable distance! And with equal ease, apparently, they could communicate with men.

Not too much was known about their life in the caves of Mars, since they actually lived within warrens inside the cavern walls. They were not alone; with them dwelt spider-like creatures which provided their arms and legs; a symbolic relationship that evidently had existed for uncounted ages.

Some of the Fuzzies had accompanied the crew of that first space ship on its return to Earth; and later, had gone with other ships as they explored the rest of the Solar System. And on Ganymede they had found what, appar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ently, they had been looking for—deposits of crystals of strangely complex composition, mildly radio-active. They seemed to be an unparalleled merging of a hydrous uranium sulphate and ytterbium nitrate, forming pale green prismatic crystals of moderate size. Of no apparent value to Terrestrials, they were of infinite worth to the Fuzzies—though what they did with them, no one knew. Among the things they offered in payment was a Martian drug which swiftly and surely cured cancer—and immediately the Ganymedean crystal hunt was on.

Prospecting was easy, technically speaking. All one needed was a Fuzzy. By means of some strange sense the Martians could detect deposits of crystals; and by that uncanny sense of direction which every Fuzzy had, they could fix its location so that other men with excavating machinery—and Fuzzies—could find the claim.

There was a twofold reason why Ganymede was not crowded with prospectors. First, the Fuzzies were very selective in their choice of companions. Very few of the rugged individuals who applied for prospecting permits qualified. Second, it took a brave man—or a fool—to tackle this crazy little world. He was there only because the returns were so enticing.

In one year he could make more on Ganymede than in a lifetime spent as a math prof in a second rate college. Only he'd had to waste a year in a hospital back on Earth recuperating from wounds inflicted by a man named Swain—who was somewhere up ahead hiding behind that curtain of dry ice!

"Far to go yet, Nathan?" he asked tensely.

"We are there," came the answer.

Mentally cursing the swirling veil of white, Landis peered through the murk. Then he saw looming up not ten feet away the rounded shape of a half-blister—a metal shelter shaped like a quarter of a globe on runners—an igloo sliced through the middle. It was big enough to hold a man comfortably; and it was the only thing that made life even passably bearable on the Ganymedean ice.

Unhooking his own shelter from the clamps that held it to the back of his suit, he drew it up close to the face of the other. Since all such shelters came from the same Terrestrial mill and were made to meet government specifications, they were outwardly identical, and had to fit together. Opening the door with pressure on a switch, he stepped inside and drew the shelters together. As clamps caught, he knew that he and his enemy were sealed within a compact metal igloo.

With prudence and patience

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

born of experience and knowledge that carelessness meant death, he checked airpressure gauge and thermometer, saw that the atomic heater was functioning properly, then began the task of getting out of his suit. Every motion was slow and deliberate. Oddly enough, now that the goal of a year lay at hand he felt coldly calm. Not that he had changed his mind. Herb Swain had shot him in what was to have been a fair fight—only his gun had not been loaded—and Swain must have known it!

He drew the Fuzzy from his jacket, felt its pulsing life beneath the infinitely soft fur—fur whose hairs were so incredibly fine that they formed almost perfect insulation against cold or heat—necessary on a planet like Mars where temperature ranged from above freezing to fifty below zero Centigrade.

"Nathan," Landis said slowly, "I'd better leave you out of this. Understand, I don't like this business either—but it's a job that has to be done. You understand, don't you?"

There was no answer. Landis reddened. He felt silly, talking like this to an unresponsive ball of fur—but so much depended on the Fuzzy...With a scowl and a shrug he placed the creature in a niche in the wall.

He patted the gun at his hip. He had carried it ever since landing on Ganymede—but now it was loaded! Grim faced Ken opened the doorway in his half of the shelter and touched the button in the facing wall which opened the door from the outside except when locked from within. Now it flashed a green signal inside telling of the arrival of company. Normally it would be opened instantly by a prospector eager for sight of a human face; and Landis grinned in sardonic anticipation of the shock he'd see in Swain's.

The door did not open. Instead, a faint voice said: "Go away, Landis. You don't want to see me."

Landis grimaced. Swain knew through his Fuzzy, of course. "You mean *you* don't want to see me—and you know why! But you'll see me anyway. Open up or I'll blast a hole in the door!"

It was an idle threat, as both men must know, since no armament that Landis would logically be carrying could penetrate the shell of the half-blister. But Swain's voice answered, "Have it your way." After a brief pause the door slid aside.

Landis crouched, gun in hand. But he did not shoot. Instead, he stared angrily down at Herb Swain, sprawling awkwardly on the narrow cot with which the shelter was equipped. His face was pale, what could be seen above his black whiskers, and there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a feverish light in his dark eyes.

"Imagine meeting you here," he said mockingly. "I'd ask you to come in and sit down but my quarters are rather cramped."

"Get up!" Landis roared. "It's taken me a year to catch you—but your running days are over. This time my gun is loaded!"

Swain said evenly, "Unfortunately I'm unarmed. Richard—that's my Fuzzy—objects to weapons." He made no attempt to rise.

Rage ran through Landis, barely held in check. "Yellow," he sneered. "You figured some day we'd meet—and you're depending on my having scruples about shooting an unarmed man." He halted, breathing hard. "You had no such scruples. Why should I?"

Swain's eyes met his and they did not waver. He smiled faintly, though there was only a stark realization of death's nearness in his gaze. "Following that line of thought I guess there's no reason why you should. Go ahead and shoot. I won't haunt you."

For moments Swain's life hung on a thin thread. More than anything else Landis wanted to shoot—but he couldn't. Suddenly he flung the weapon aside.

"Okay, then. Hand to hand. It's better than you deserve—but I'll give you a break you never gave me. Now get up! Or must I drag you up?"

Swain's lips drew into a hard thin line. Sweat stood out on his forehead as he reached a sitting position. Slowly he arose to his feet, the veins pulsing violently in his throat as though he were drawing upon every latent resource—and abruptly, with a stifled groan, he collapsed!

Landis, fists clenched in readiness, leaped forward with a cry of consternation.

No doubt about it—Swain was out, cold! Effortlessly, in Ganymede's weak gravity, he caught him up and placed him on his cot. Swiftly he examined him; found the trouble in moments. His left leg, just below the knee, was splotched with greenish-purple and was swollen to twice its normal size. A bad break, unquestionably. And he'd had the guts to stand up on it! Had somehow been able to get inside his shelter after he'd broken his leg, had gotten out of suit, had put it away, and had managed to get his cot out of the wall. Grudging respect replaced some of Landis' wrath.

Slowly he straightened and looked down at the unconscious man who had been the object of his hatred for so long a time. Then he turned toward the Fuzzy in its niche in the wall.

Ruefully he said, "So this is why you brought me here! I should have known there was a joker in the deck."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Again he looked at Swain, then shrugged resignedly.

Swiftly he sat to work in the marvelously compact quarters of his shelter. Water came from the base of the half-blister, automatically taken from the ice of Ganymede, which, through electrolysis, also provided the air he breathed. He set two vessels of water to heating on tiny intra-red units, one for coffee, the other to bathe that fractured leg.

Swain came to his senses while he worked on the injured limb. He said mockingly, "I suppose you know I didn't really pass out. I faked it to get out of fighting."

Landis nodded. "Sure. I'm letting you get away with it because it'll be a lot more satisfaction to beat up a well man than a cripple. I wouldn't take advantage of a rat or weasel—or even just plain skunk." He could feel Swain stiffen but he didn't look at him.

With the leg bathed and wrapped as best he could do it, Landis approached the injured man with freshly brewed coffee and some food concentrate. "Here," he said tersely, "swallow this. I want you to live till I get you back to Center City."

"Center City?" Swain's voice faltered. "You're not going to—"

"I'm dragging you back! You don't suppose I'd let you get away from me now, do you? Not when I've been on your trail as long as I have. Now drink this and shut up."

"It's probably poisoned," Swain growled. But he drank the coffee and ate the food.

After Landis himself had eaten, he got out some of the mineral salts which the Fuzzies—absorbed—and put the required amounts of it in the niches that held Nathan and Richard. Then drawing his own cot from its compartment, he dropped on it and took a much needed nap.

He awoke about six hours later. Swain's condition seemed unchanged. He fed him and the Fuzzies, ate, and prepared to travel. He encountered some minor complications because he now had to haul a full blister behind him; but his exit from the shelter was finally accomplished without mishap; it was again sealed and the hemisphere was clamped to his suit. The hauling wasn't as difficult as might be supposed, since the weak gravity multiplied his strength and endurance.

As he plodded along under Nathan's direction, Ken Landis was barely conscious of the keening wind, swirling snow and endless white plain. His thoughts were on the man in the shelter behind him. He reviewed again, as he had done many times before, the incidents leading up to the shooting which had sent him to the hospital.

The quarrel had started in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the office of the Registrar of Claims in Center City. There had been three of them in the fracas at first. There had been difficulty about their claims overlapping. Swain had been first to report in, his Fuzzy sending in the position of the claim from the field. He had been second, and the third man—he couldn't recall his name—had been last. When the argument began in the Claims office, this third man had stepped out of the picture, saying he'd be satisfied with that portion of his claim which did not infringe on the other two. Neither he nor Swain had been willing to agree to any such arrangement. The quarrel had continued after they had left the office; and they had finally agreed to go outside the city and settle the matter as such affairs are usually settled in frontier regions.

It was only when they were shooting that Landis discovered that his gun had been emptied—and by that time it was too late for him to do anything about it. Between the cold, loss of air, and his wounds, he'd been in pretty bad shape. Swain had taken him inside the City, saving his life; but it had taken a long time for him to recover. As he thought of that seemingly endless siege, his expression grew grim and he vowed anew that he'd give Swain all he had coming to him.

Landis became aware of the distressed thought of his Fuzzy. There was a more vigorous attitude of protest than ever before. It irritated Landis. Didn't these beings have a sense of justice?

The answer formed sharply in his mind: "Of course we do."

"Then how can you condone Swain's removing the shells from my gun?"

"We do not," came the clear thought. "He did not."

"What!" Landis cried. "Then who did?"

"The other man with a crystal claim. His name was Tully. His claim was involved with yours only, not with Swain's. He wanted you to die." There was a momentary pause. "His Fuzzy left him. He is dead."

With his thoughts in a turmoil, Landis halted, stood still. "Why didn't you tell me before? I might have shot Swain."

"You did not ask."

Uncertainly, Landis stared back at the metal dome. He thought of Swain, of the, till then, strange contradictions in his character. What should he do?

The quiet answer came from Nathan. "Richard says Swain is badly in need of the attention of a physician. And we have not very far to go."

With new vigor Ken Landis strode ahead, putting eve-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ry ounce of available energy into the effort. The white miles passed swiftly. As he strode on, the dry ice storm ceased abruptly in one of those excessively rare times when a part of Ganymede enjoys a brief period of calm. And near the horizon he saw Center City.

Minutes later he and the merged half-blisters were within the shelter of the huge metal dome. Even before the frost crystals had ceased sprouting on his suit, he was out of the pondrous thing, ready to dash for a doctor. He faced the gate attendant. "Quick—a doctor!" he exclaimed. "There's an injured man in the blister."

The other nodded imperturbably. "An ambulance is already on its way. Your Fuzzy relayed your message a while ago."

"Oh." Landis raised an eyebrow. He should have thought of that. "Good. And you'll see to the gear, as usual. Charge everything to me—Ken Landis, License 4669. Five percent for yourself, naturally."

The attendant smiled enthusiastically. "Don't worry about a thing. I'll give it my personal attention."

Moments later the ambulance appeared, and Landis stood helplessly by while efficient doctors and nurses got the injured man out of his half-blister and onto a stretcher. He seemed to be unconscious. Just before they bore him into the ambulance he opened his eyes and looked at Landis with a grin. "So long, sucker," he said with a feeble wave of his hand.

Grinning in turn, Landis waved and turned away, heading toward the office of the Registrar of Claims. He had a claim to file this time that would really create a stir—one of the richest, according to Nathan, that had ever been found.

"Hello, Landis," the clerk greeted him. "Here to confirm your claim, eh? We have the preliminary report from your Fuzzy? It's in the clear. Any changes?"

"None on the position, of course. Nathan's figures stand. But I want this one filed in my name and my partner's, Herb Swain. Fifty-fifty."

The clerk looked at Landis respectfully. "Say—you fellows are really hitting it big! The checker's report on the other claim show it's unusually rich."

Landis stared uncomprehendingly. "The other claim?"

"Sure—the one Swain's Fuzzy filed a couple of weeks ago. Hasn't been in to confirm it yet. In his name and yours—equal shares."

For moments Landis stared dumbly, then realizing how odd he must appear, he nodded briefly. "Yeah—a good claim," he mumbled, and turning, hastily left the office.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Outside he paused and took a deep breath.

His hand reached up and touched the downy fur of the Fuzzy in his pocket—the Fuzzy which, in common with all Fuzzies, liked only likeable people—and abhored violence and the thought of violence. The Fuzzy which must be intelligent, and about which Terrans knew so very little...

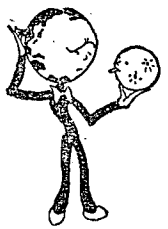
"Nathan," Landis said with mock severity, "I'll bet you and Richard planned this entire deal—from start to finish. Didn't you?"

Nathan's thought held a trace of indignation. "We had nothing to do with Swain's broken leg. He stepped into a fissure in the ice." There was a pause. "He has reached the hospital now; and Richard says he would be pleased to see you."

"Oh yes!" Landis grinned broadly as he strode along the metal sidewalk. "I'd better see to it that my partner gets everything that's coming to him." His grin widened.

"Thanks, Nathan, you fuzzy old fraud."

HAVE YOU A COMPLETE FILE OF FANTASTIC UNIVERSE?



HERE'S your chance to purchase all 41 issues published to date. A few copies are still available and they are yours by filling in the coupon below. FANTASTIC UNIVERSE is always star-studded by the best writers in the field. We are now offering these at BARGAIN PRICES—single copies at 35c; three copies at $1; six copies at $1.75; and twelve copies at $3.25.

KING-SIZE PUBLICATIONS, Inc. FU 77

320 5th Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.

Kindly send me the copies of FANTASTIC UNIVERSE which I have circled below. One copy at 35c, three copies at $1, six copies at $1.75, twelve copies at $3.25. I enclose $——— in full payment; postage prepaid.

JUNE '53; AUG. '53 OCT. '53; JAN. '54; MAR. '54; MAY '54; JULY '54; SEPT. '54; OCT. '54; NOV. '54; DEC. '54; JAN. '55; FEB. '55; MAR. '55; APR. '55; MAY '55; JUNE '55; JULY '55; AUG. '55; SEPT. '55; OCT. '55; NOV. '55; DEC. '55; JAN. '56; FEB. '56; MAR. '56; APR. '56; MAY '56; JUNE '56; JULY '56; AUG. '56; SEPT. '56; OCT. '56; NOV. '56; DEC. '56; JAN. '57; FEB. '57; MAR. '57; APR. '57; MAY '57; JUNE '57;

Name _____

Address _____

City, Zone, State _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fiddler on titan

by . . . MANLY WADE WELLMAN

There's an old saying about music's ability to charm. The saying must have anticipated Ham's talent for friendship.

WHEN CAPTAIN found Ham had brought it, all that way from Earth, he was mad enough to smash it, or kill Ham, or both. As it happened, he did neither.

"Wh-wh-why!" Captain stuttered. He was big, brawny and wise in space, but when his temper went, he stuttered. "Wh-why, Hamilton, you knew before we started th-that was against reg-regulations!"

We all stood around the rocket, with its cargo half unloaded on the shaley blue rocks in the frosty air—stood, all fourteen of us, listening to Captain and Ham Hamilton. Ham just grinned, in his lanky way, and cuddled the thing in his arms like a baby.

"I know, sure enough, Captain," he said in his voice that was always soft. "It's too bad, I was insubordinate. But I couldn't bear to leave my fiddle behind. It was my daddy's, and before that it was his daddy's, and it's gone everywhere with us Hamiltons. Anyway, it didn't scale any more'n four-five pounds, Earth weight—"

Manly Wade Wellman's father is an internationally famous doctor, painter and writer, while his brother, Paul Wellman, has won recognition as a best selling novelist. Manly himself is one of the best known names in the field, famous for the bitter-bright quality of his writing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Four or five poouunds?" Captain drawled, to whip the stutter. "Don't you knoooow, Hamilton, th-that the load of this rocket was mathematically calculated to the oooounce? That nobody brought any personal possessions—all supplies are to be by issue?"

"Reckon I never thought much about it," said Ham, "but since it's here, let me keep it."

"Let him keep it, Captain," said Commissary. She was a woman, not too young and not too old, and plumper than Ham. But she liked him, the way the other six female members of the expedition had learned to like him on the months and months of trip out.

Those hundred or so words I've quoted are historically important, for they were the first human words spoken on Titan, Saturn's biggest and only habitable satellite, when Expedition A got there. We were fourteen, as I say, seven male, seven female. I was the youngest male, twelve years old, Apprentice Executive Jethro Dillon. Vandy Stice, eleven, was the youngest female, Apprentice Records. Everybody else was adult. It would be eighteen years before the inner planets lined up so as to let another rocket try for the Saturnian System. Looking back, I honestly doubt if Spaceways, Inc., seriously expected us to reach Titan, or to last long there if we did.

Captain was in command, in space and here on the ground. We'd set down in fairly level country, a plain with tufts of hardy-looking vegetation and a big lake nearby—"camp in reach of wood and water," immemorial pioneer fashion. We had a Doctor, a Records, a Laboratory Chief, a Commissary, a Builder, a Naturalist. Ham Hamilton was Naturalist. We had a Mechanic, an Engineer, a Signal Chief, a Security Chief, a Synthetics Chief, and, of course, us two apprentices. We all wore thermo-heated gear, but we could breathe the cool air, and we had light from both the distant sun and from big Saturn, like a broad-hatted face in the sky.

"I think Ham's right," pleaded Doctor to Captain. "He ought to be allowed to keep his fiddle."

Doctor was Dr. Lispeth Crosslin, and she was small and slim and dark-haired, with sweet eyes and mouth. I think Captain liked her, in a way that made him angry that she pleaded for Ham, and at the same time forced him to give in. "We don't even know if he can play it," Captain growled.

"Oh, I can, I can." Ham had been tuning the fiddle all the time, picking at its strings with his fingertips. He tucked it under his lean jaw and grinned above its apple-red

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

belly and laid his bow across it. He played.

Fellows, that was the first music ever played by human hand on Titan. It was what Ham called a country song. Its name was *Susan Brown,* and later I learned the words to sing:

Choose your partner as you go,
Lovely Susan Brown.....

Everybody listened with a smile, except Captain, who listened with a scowl. Commissary patted her booted foot a time or two, Titan's blue shale, and Ham grinned the broader at her while he played the louder. But little Vandy's blue eyes grew wide as she stared off away from us, and "Look out!" she squealed suddenly.

They must have been stealing closer all the time Ham played, and they must have stopped when he stopped. There were twenties of them, maybe hundreds—like jelly-blobs, purple and green and orange and yellow, some as big as bushels, some as big as barrels, a few bigger. Vandy had seen them closing in. While we goggled around, they began to hunch nearer still, with a sort of open-and-close motion, like an amoeba under the most powerful and enlarging microscope ever dreamed of.

"Your music brought them," Captain grated at Ham, as though he'd die a trifle happier if he could blame it on that fiddle.

"It did?" Ham stroked the strings with his bow, a time or two more. And the jelly-blobs began moving faster, moving all together, like waves on an ocean, hemming us in. "It sure enough did," said Ham, stopping again.

"They're alive," said Security. "Hostile." And his gauntlet groped at his holster.

"Don't draw a weapon, they've got you covered," said Captain. He was right. Here and there metal rods, like some sort of gun-muzzles, stuck out through the jelly of the blobs.

"No," said Ham. "Don't draw any weapons. They might want to make friends." He tucked fiddle and bow under his left arm. "Hey, friend!" he whinnied, and stuck out his right hand, as if to shake with the nearest and biggest blob.

Even Ham couldn't have dreamed what would happen, and he turned out to be our most expert dreamer.

The blob was a big greeny-orange mass, and it stretched and hoisted itself up, taller and narrower. Its topmost part rounded out, like a head above a half-modelled pair of shoulders. Before our eyes, it made a soft, crude human shape—head, body, two legs, two arms. And it put out a sort of a flipper and shook hands with Ham.

"Told you they want to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

friends!" Ham was chuckling.

The others made themselves quickly into human-like shapes, at least as human as snow men or cookie men, and they were shaking hands with us.

"What do you know?" Ham kept saying. He was the only one of us not surprised out of words. Ham didn't think that friendship between worlds was too utterly strange, I guess. Finally, he began playing again, and the jelly-shapes swayed and waved, and began to sink out of shape into blobs again.

"He called them with the music," Doctor was telling Captain. "They understand it, somehow."

"I wish they'd go away," said Vandy, still scared.

"Maybe they're waiting to be told good-by," said Ham, and he changed tunes. *Good Night, Ladies,* was what he played, and the jelly-things began to draw away, slowly and calmly, as if they were being polite. As they drew back among the brush and high rocks, one or two made brief human shapes, as if to insist they weren't too different from us. But we were glad to see them go.

"All hands continue unloading stores," said Captain, "and stand by to make us a shelter. It'll be night before we know it."

AS ALL the worlds know by now, night doesn't come that quick on Titan. All Saturn's moons turn once in a trip around, which means that a day on Titan is nearly sixteen Earth days, and there's not much dark where we were. Our part of Titan didn't have much sunlight, but Saturn came full and bright and a glory in the plum-black sky.

We unshipped the whole cargo, then we dismantled the rocket hull and made ourselves quarters; four dome-shaped huts of metal, with passages and chambers connecting them. Outside this we built up native rock insulation, mortaring it with concrete our synthesizers made of the blue shale. And we were home, the first colonials on Titan, waiting for the next colonials to come in time to celebrate my thirtieth birthday.

Of course, Captain superintended all this. Synthetics Chief helped with mocking up plastic and mineral building materials by what processes could be set to work. Builder directed, and the rest of us did the coarse work. Vandy and I, being Apprentices, fetched and carried for everybody.

We all bustled except Ham, who never stirred out of an amble, but when we were through I heard Doctor and Captain talk, and Captain would be damned if Ham hadn't outworked everyone, or so he said. And Doctor replied no wonder, Ham was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

richest of us all. We just shared and shared alike in stores and shelter; Ham had a fiddle.

Not that he didn't enrich us all with his fiddle music. We chopped Titan time into Earth-day chunks, and when, at the end of nine hours of hard work, we had our shelter roughed out, Ham reminded us how there used to be house-raising dances back home on Earth. Everybody yelled for a dance except Captain, who didn't say one way or the other. Of course, it was soft-bright daylight still, but Ham took Vandy and me and showed us a couple of dance figures, the Virginia reel and the 'possum trot. He played for us while we went through it, then others joined in. Above Ham's nimble fiddling we could hear his voice calling:

"Allemand . . . . Do-si-do . . .Address your partner . . ."

While we all danced, we learned what those things meant. And while we danced, the jelly-blob Titanians came oozing back around us, first to sway and bob, then to rough themselves into two-legged pseudo-human mockeries and to step out something like the same dances, the reel and the trot and the Paul Jones.

Looking back, I realize we would have been creepy with fear but for Ham. He yelled "Hey! Hello!" at the Titanians, he shook hands with some of them between his fiddlings, he whooped and called to them, "Allemand" and "Do-si-do" and the other directions. All of a sudden he was telling the truth, they were friendly, they were sociable, they were our neighbors. He stopped his music, and they sagged back into lumps, but they didn't look creepy or ghastly or anything. Doctor, breathing fast from that last dance figure, looked around at them.

"They have psychology," she said, "which means they have sense and emotion. And it's the music that makes them kin to us."

"I don't quite comprehend," said Captain, more gently than so far since we'd left home, months before.

"Music is a vehicle," said Doctor. "It connects their mentality with ours. They must communicate with each other by telepathy—they're rational enough to have those tools and weapons they sometimes poke out of their inner substance—and the music not only attracts them, it informs them. When the music goes on, they can understand us."

"They can understand Ham," said Captain. "He's our ambassador, and our interpreter. Ham," said Captain, "I could confiscate that instrument of yours as contraband. But I won't."

That was peace between them. And Captain was more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cheerful after that. He didn't even look mean when Doctor whispered and smiled with Ham. He began to pay more attention to Commissary. She was comfortable and orderly, and even Vandy and I, young as we were, realized that she and Captain were good types for each other.

Ham had something to add to Doctor's short-order theory. In the first days of America, he said, fiddles were taken to the frontier because their music was agony to the wolves. The first settlers would make music in their cabins at night, to jangle the ears of the wolves and teach them to stay away, stay away from the chicken-runs and the hog-pens, stay away from open windows inside which slept young children.....it was horrible, kind of, to think about, and by the same token nice to think that the Titanians were friendly and attracted by music.

TIME WENT on, even Titanian time. We tested the rocks for building materials and minerals, the vegetation for organics. There were big, spongy plants, like immense tough lichens, that could be whipsawed into planks and treated with acid into plasticoid lumber. Doctor and Laboratory Chief tested smaller plants again and again for days and weeks, until they decided that they could be safe ingredients in synthetic food. We learned even to like stews of Titanian vegetables, they tasted better than the dull, musty synthetics from elemenal Earth substances. Overhead, the big hooped ball of Saturn grew bigger and fuller as we went into Titanian evening. Captain and Mechanic and Signal Chief broke out and activated the little pinnace rocket, and took me along for a few hours' sail to the side of Titan facing sunward. From there we attempted our communications toward the Jovian moon-settlement, hoping they could pick up our signals and relay them Earthward, so the home folks would know we were safe and pulling our own weight toward a real Saturnian-system colony. We couldn't be sure they caught us, for we hadn't anything that could catch a reply as yet, but we signalled plenty, then headed back home. It was home for us all now, all fourteen of us, by the big lake we called Lake Landing, and the many-purpose building we called Titanville.

When we landed, it was Vandy who came rushing to us. She said, "Welcome back, sir!" to Captain, but it was my hand she grabbed. I thought Vandy looked bigger and not so scrawny. Maybe life and food on Titan agreed with her—maybe she was starting to grow up—maybe it was I myself who was growing up to notice those things, along with how blue

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vandy's eyes were, and how fluffy her brown hair.

"Jeth," she said, "such things happen, you can't guess!"

"He'll be guessing plenty in a couple more years," said Signal Chief, making an adult joke, but Vandy kept on talking.

"Ham's able to tell those Titanians a n y t h i n g!" she chattered out, and she explained, and later we saw.

Ham was building on Doctor's theory. He'd found that dance tunes made the Titanians dance, and that *Good Night, Ladies* made them go. So he experimented with other tunes, and they all worked. For instance, after we'd found the good plants, he'd play an old army bugle call, high and reedy on the strings, the Mess Call: *Come get your coffee, bacon, pork and beans.* And Titanians would show up, lugging loads of stuff our synthetic gear could process into edible material. That inspired Ham to try another piece, out by the diggings—*Off to work we go,* and Titanians showed up to poke sharp metal picks out of themselves and loosen minerals for us. He and Doctor studied them a lot; he and Doctor liked to do things together. Finally Ham gave his opinion:

"It's not the music, and it's not my thought. Not either of them alone. But when I play the music, and think about what it means, they know what I'm getting across to them."

Naturally we were grateful to the Titanians, and we did for them what they liked best—staged dances and concerts. Ham got maple wood from the cargo cases, and, good whittler that he was, cobbled out a guitar for me. He strung it with fine wires and taught me to play it. He strung it four-string, like a fiddle; that kind of guitar was called a git-fiddle, he told me, back where Ham came from.

And Vandy learned to blow on a kind of whistle with finger-stops, and some times she and I played for the dances so Ham and Doctor could step off a few sets themselves.

THIS WENT on for five or six weeks, Earth style, I guess, when the trouble came.

I'd been off duty a while, and wandering among the thickets. I heard Ham playing, and ambled over to listen. He was with Doctor, and he looked at her as he played, and she listened with all her heart. He sang with his music:

Her lips were red as red can be,
Her eyes were brown as brown,
Her hair was like the thundercloud
Before the rain comes down.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Oh, beautiful," I heard Doctor say, and she moved close to Ham, her hair truly like the thundercloud, so black and wavy. Then they moved apart, snickering, for the Titanians had come close, and they were in close pairs, all of them, like Ham and Doctor. So I wandered off because I didn't want to butt in on anything.

I strolled here and I strolled there, looking over what we'd done so far on Titan—our quarries, our reapings of vegetable growths, our little work projects here and there. I knew they weren't much, but we were only fourteen, and we were getting things ready for more folks. Titan was a good place to live, I decided. If Vandy had been with me, I might have talked a lot about what would happen when the two of us grew up. Even so, I ambled quite a distance, and maybe two hours passed before I glanced back toward Titanville, in time to see a rocket setting itself down tail first.

"Expedition B!" I whooped, all to myself, and started back that way. "Why so soon? We didn't expect another till I was grown up—"

I began to trot, eager to see the new folks and find out why they'd followed us almost at once. It was a good distance, as I've said, a couple of miles or so, and I had time for all the happy imaginings in the world. There might even be another boy Apprentice, I hoped not so smooth an article as to catch Vandy's eyes away from me, but somebody to play with when I had time to play. In fact, I turned over every possibility but what was really the fact.

Everybody who knows history knows the fact now.

It was Dravis, the man who'd done such things on so many worlds that every law officer, everywhere, was after him—on Earth, on Mars, on Venus, in the Jovian Colonies. Dravis and three men nearly as bad as he was had run off with a government rocket at the same time our Expedition A had cleared for the Saturnian System. And they'd landed, not too far away but in country where they could hide. They'd spied on us all that time, until they saw we were worth raiding. Then they swooped down.

WHEN AT last I trudged up to the main yard, I saw the four strange men, and several of us, and one of the strangers, big and square-made and shaggy-haired, doing most of the talking. I think I guessed something was wrong before I got close enough to see the electro-automatic pistols in their hands. By the time I saw those, I was too close to get away. The big shaggy-haired man pointed his pistol and yelled, "Come on and join us, sonny," and I had to come.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dravis and his men had taken us off guard. When they landed, Captain and Signal Chief had strolled out to see who they were, and they'd been captured and shut up in the rocket. Then Dravis and the other three came to our shelter and dropped in on Laboratory Chief and Security Chief and Engineer. Those looked up into gun-muzzles and surrendered. So with the others. Ham and Doctor, coming back together, had been captured. They stood out there, with Commissary and Vandy. Ham had tried to do something, I guess. His cheek was bloody, and one of Dravis' men, a deep-eyed little scrap of a man, had Ham's fiddle and bow in his hands.

I found out these things later. Just then, Dravis only grinned at me with his big long teeth and said, "Sonny, we've just dropped in to run things ourselves for a while. Be quiet and you won't get hurt for the next few minutes."

Ham looked at him, level and long. "That means, you'll start killing us in a little while."

"Oh, pretty soon, pretty soon," said Dravis. "Not right away. We want you folks to tell us the run of things."

"We'll tell you nothing," said Commissary.

"You'll tell us everything," Dravis assured her. "We know how to get people to talk."

I goggled at one and another and then another. The deep-eyed man who had Ham's fiddled laughed at me, a short, mean laugh, one of the shortest and meanest I ever heard.

"Surprised to see us, huh?" he sneered. "We could have taken you over any time after your first day. But we wanted you to get things working, routines lined up, before we bothered you. Waited till you were ripe to pluck."

"You'll kill us all," said Doctor, but Dravis smirked and shook his head.

"Not you, Doc. You're a medico, and you're good looking. We keep the women, the good-looking ones around here." He looked from Doctor to Commissary. "Eighteen years from now, when the next bunch arrives, we'll be settled in. They'll believe whatever story we tell about how the others died and we took over. And by then, you ladies will back us up. That's the way of ladies."

"Nice to have such a pretty doctor," smirked the deep-eyed man.

"Never mind," Dravis told him. "The Doc is mine. You can have this one," and he pointed his gloved finger at Commissary.

"Got it all fixed up, haven't you?" said Ham.

"With your help, yes." Dravis turned and faced him. "We've been checking on you. That fiddle of yours charms

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these Titanians, doesn't it?"

"They understand what I'm driving at when I play it," said Ham.

"Then you stay alive. You fiddle for us, and we get them doing whatever work we need done. Is that a deal?"

"What if I say no?" said Ham.

"You can say no for a while, but not for long when I put my wrecking crew to work on you," Dravis said. "Anyway, you'll have it easy. Just playing dance music for us."

"Us and the Titanians," said the deep-eyed man.

"And the women," added Dravis. "I've been aching to dance with them myself, every time we watched you from over yonder."

"D a n c e?" said Ham. "Dance?"

He grinned. The creases in his cheek showed through the blood.

"Well," he said, "why not?"

Doctor looked at him and almost whimpered, but Dravis laughed.

"Sure, why not?" he said. "Give the guy back his fiddle."

The deep-eyed man handed it to Ham. Ham took a good look, plucked the strings. "Right now?" he said.

"Now's as good a time as any," snorted Dravis. "Me and the Doc can get acquainted that way."

"All right," said Ham, and tucked the fiddle under his chin and laid the bow across it.

The music started, a lively, happy-sounding tune. Dravis took Doc by her hand and made her dance with him. The deep-eyed one led Commissary out, and she stepped out the dance as if she was drugged. The other two kept their guns ready, and the rest of us just watched, feeling as if we'd turned to stone inside.

"That's a good tune," Dravis said as he pranced past with Doctor. "I never heard it. It must be old."

"Older than space-flight," said Ham, not missing a beat.

"What's it called?" hollered the deep-eyed man.

"Rally 'Round the Flag," Ham said above his music.

Dravis stopped dancing and let go of Doctor.

"Wait!" he bawled. *"Rally 'Round the Flag*—isn't that a war song?"

He didn't have to wait for an answer.

For the Titanians were there, our friends the Titanians, our rescuers the Titanians, dozens and hundreds of them.

And out of their jellyselves poked their weapons, their deadly weapons.

Before Dravis could get the blank look off his face, he and his three raiders were shot dead.

"Thanks," said Ham to them, and stopped playing. "You always appreciate the meaning of my music."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Science-Fiction Club's Amazing Moon-Tour Offer...

continued from Back Cover

NOW you can get an authentic Round-Trip Reservation to the Moon FREE when you take the Lunar Quiz on other side—PLUS any 3 of the masterpieces of Science-Fiction described on this page for only $1. Each is packed with rocket-swift adventure that takes you soaring in time and space . . . written by the greatest science-fiction writers. A $11.95 value, full-length, full-size, in handsome, *permanent bindings — and* all yours for only $1 on this amazing offer!

Take Exciting Quiz On Other Side and Get Your *Free* ROUND-TRIP RESERVATION TO THE MOON

THE TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION CLASSICS
Omnibus of SCIENCE FICTION
THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY
THE REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING
the dragon in the sea

***Plus* Any 3 OF THESE SCIENCE-FICTION BEST SELLERS**

WORTH UP TO $11.95 IN PUBLISHERS' EDITIONS

Yours for Only $1.00 WITH MEMBERSHIP

TREASURY OF SCIENCE-FICTION CLASSICS. 4 famous novels; a complete play: scores of all-time great S-F stories, including H. G. Wells' "Invasion from Mars," made famous by Orson Welles' hoax newscast. (Pub. ed. $2.95)

OMNIBUS OF SCIENCE-FICTION. 43 classic stories by top authors. Wonders of Earth and Man. Amazing Inventions. Space travel and visitors from outer space. Adventures in dimension. Worlds of Tomorrow. (Pub. ed. $3.50)

THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION ANTHOLOGY. A story about the first A-Bomb . . . written *before* it was invented! Plus a score *of other best tales from a dozen* years of Astounding Science Fiction Magazine. (Pub. ed. $3.50)

REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS *by Edward J. Ruppelt.* The first authoritative report on hitherto hushed-up facts about "flying saucers" . . . by a former Air Force expert in charge of their investigation. NOT fiction, but amazing FACT! (Pub. ed. $4.95)

DRAGON IN THE SEA *by Frank Herbert.* You're on a 21st-century undersea mission from which no human has ever returned. Now 8,000 feet down, you learn that an unknown crewman wants you DEAD! (Pub. ed. $2.95)

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE-FICTION. (New edition) 17 thrilling stories selected from Fantasy and Science-Fiction Magazine. Adventure in other worlds . . . mystery, intrigue, suspense! (Pub. ed. $3.50)

SEND NO MONEY—*Just Mail Coupon*

YOUR choice of ANY 3 of the new Science-Fiction masterpieces described here—AT ONLY $1 FOR ALL THREE—Plus FREE Round-Trip Reservation to the Moon. (See other side.) Two books are your gift for joining, and one is your first Club selection. Every month, you will be offered the "cream" of the new $2.50 to $3.95 Science-Fiction books—for only $1. You take only those books you really want—as few as four a year. This offer may have to be withdrawn. So mail coupon RIGHT NOW to:

SCIENCE-FICTION BOOK CLUB
Dept. FU-7 Garden City, N. Y.

SCIENCE-FICTION BOOK CLUB
Dept. FU-7 Garden City, N. Y.

I have completed quiz on other side. Please send FREE Moon-Tour Reservation. Also rush 3 books checked below, as my gift books *and first selection. Bill me only* $1 (plus shipping charge), and enroll me as a member. Every month send the Club's free bulletin, so that I may decide whether I wish to receive the coming selection. For each book I accept, I will pay only $1 plus shipping. I need take only 4 books during each year I am a member—and I may resign at any time after accepting 4 selections.

GUARANTEE: If not delighted, I may return all books in 7 days, pay nothing, and this membership will be cancelled.

- ☐ Astounding S-F Anthology
- ☐ Best from Fantasy and S-F
- ☐ Dragon in the Sea
- ☐ Omnibus of Science-Fiction
- ☐ Report on UFO's
- ☐ Treasury of S-F Classics

Name_____ (PLEASE PRINT)

Address_____

City_____ Zone____ State_____

Selection price in Canada $1.10 plus shipping. Address Science-Fiction Club, 105 Bond Street, Toronto 2. (Offer good only in U. S. and Canada)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Take This Lunar Quiz

and WIN A ROUND-TRIP RESERVATION TO THE MOON

FREE!

This authentic certificate is a Bonafide Reservation for one of the first commercial flights to the Moon

YES, a passing grade on this Lunar Quiz will bring you — ABSOLUTELY FREE — a genuine round-trip Reservation which certifies that you are among the VERY FIRST to apply for passage to the Moon! Although it in no way commits you to make the voyage, it signifies that your name is filed in Science-Fiction Book Club archives to be turned over to the first commercial company making trips to the Moon.

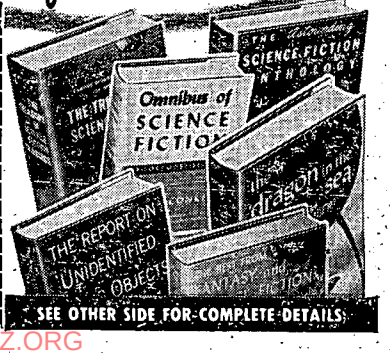
Your reservation includes many amazing facts: your actual weight on the Moon, a Rocket Ship Schedule, etc. To get your wallet-size Moon Tour Reservation right away, take the Quiz below. Then choose ANY 3 of the exciting books described on the other side—for only $1 with membership in the Science-Fiction Book Club. Mail coupon at once!

Any 3

OF THESE COMPLETE NEW MASTERPIECES OF

SCIENCE-FICTION

Yours for Only $1.00 WITH MEMBERSHIP



SEE OTHER SIDE FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

CAN YOU PASS THIS LUNAR QUIZ?

How much do you know about the Moon? Circle the answers you think are correct, fill out reverse side, and mail today for your Genuine Moon-Tour Reservation Certificate.

1. Diameter of the Moon is: smaller — greater — the same as Earth's.
2. Since its gravity is weaker than Earth's, on the Moon you would weigh: more — less than on Earth.
3. The Moon is really a: star — satellite — planet.
4. Distance to the Moon is about: 93,000,000 miles — 238,000 miles — 9,000 miles.
5. Scientists have proved that human life does — does not exist on the Moon.
6. Surface of the Moon is rough — smooth — covered with water.

IMPORTANT: This application will NOT be honored unless filled out and signed on the reverse side.

SEE OTHER SIDE OF COUPON FOR UP TO $11.95 WORTH OF SCIENCE-FICTION BEST SELLERS FOR ONLY $1.00!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED